

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES
The Official Union Newsletter – "The Word to the Wise"
Number 47 – November 24, 2022



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U.S.: IRANIAN DRONE ATTACKED TANKER

The United States Central Command has pointed to Iran as the culprit in the November 15th attack on a Liberian-flagged commercial tanker. The M/T PACIFIC ZIRCON, linked to an Israeli billionaire, was targeted by a bomb-carrying drone off the coast of Oman.

The vessel took damage but no casualties were reported. The U.S. Fifth Fleet released a statement saying, "the drone flew into the aft section...punching a hole through the hull, while subsequently penetrating and damaging internal compartments. The UAV's explosive impact also damaged a shipboard boiler, potable water tank and life raft." The White House reported that intelligence shows that Iran was behind the attack. U.S. Central Command asserted that a Shahed-136 explosive-tipped drone was used – the same type of drone that Iran has allegedly supplied to Russia in their war against Ukraine.

"This unmanned aerial vehicle attack against a civilian vessel in this critical maritime strait demonstrates, once again, the destabilizing nature of Iranian malign activity in the region" said General Michael "Erik" Kurilla, commander of U.S. Central Command.

SUPPORT FOR ALADS FUND AFTER TRAGIC ACCIDENT

M.E.B.A. affiliated Association for Los Angeles Deputy Sheriffs (ALADS) is dealing with a senseless tragedy last week after an SUV barreled into dozens of sheriff recruits who were running in formation as part of a training program in Whittier, CA. 25 were hurt, including some with head trauma, broken bones, lost limbs and five with critical injuries. The 22-year old driver of the Honda CR-V had veered onto the wrong side of the road around 6:30 am on November 16 and scattered the 75 recruits at around 30-40 mph before colliding into a light post. Authorities say alcohol was not a factor but the driver's attorney alleges he was asleep at the wheel. "They had zero warning," said Capt. Pat MacDonald. "Thank God for that light pole because the vehicle ultimately hit it and stopped, as opposed to possibly hitting more recruits." The "Class 464" recruits were in Week 8 of a 22-week program at the nearby S.T.A.R.S. Academy where young men and women train to become deputy sheriffs.

ALADS represents more than 8,000 deputy sheriffs and district attorney investigators working in Los Angeles County. An ALADS foundation is assisting the injured and help is appreciated. You

can support the ALADS C.A.R.E.S. (Cops and Relatives Emergency Support) Foundation at <https://alads.org/aladscare>

AMP EDITORIAL: WAIVERS ARE A SOUNDBITE...NOT A SOLUTION

Attempting to head off some of the inevitable shrill, irrational criticisms of the Jones Act tied into winter energy prices, American Maritime Partnership President Ku'uhaku Park penned an editorial warning that reflexive calls to waive the Jones Act won't increase the diesel fuel inventory or generate cost savings for consumers. He noted that certain energy companies are already calling for Jones Act waivers particularly in the Northeast as a way to boost supplies, but finds those calls misguided.

“In truth,” he wrote, “global market dynamics – particularly the ability of energy companies to earn significant profits by exporting diesel overseas rather than supplying it to the Northeast United States – are the reason for the U.S. diesel fuel shortage. Waivers to the Jones Act will not generate cost savings for American consumers...In short, traders, refiners, oil companies and arbitrageurs are using market forces to earn larger profits by exporting their products abroad where they can command better prices, particularly in Europe, and consumers in the Northeast are paying the world price for these fuels.”

Though a waiver might sound good to foreign interests and those uneducated to the reality, Park said that “Jones Act waivers are a soundbite and not a solution” and argued that such exceptions help little and could cause major damage. “Waivers would be harmful to jobs and our national security while padding the pockets of foreign energy traders who seek to leverage market forces and the geopolitical environment to squeeze every last dime of profit from the situation. Waiving the Jones Act will do nothing to help with diesel shortages and consumer costs, and the reflexive calls for waivers only serve weaken our nation and undermine American jobs.”

You can read the editorial at <https://tinyurl.com/ycxyp8wk>

LAWMAKERS WANT STRICTER FMC ENFORCEMENT OF FOREIGN CARRIER PRACTICES

Members of Congress responsible for passing the Ocean Shipping Reform Act (OSRA) want the Federal Maritime Commission to more strictly enforce the new law. Signed into law this last summer, OSRA aims to prohibit foreign ocean carriers from discriminating against American exporters and unreasonably refusing cargo space accommodations. The law gave new powers to the FMC to make it a more effective regulating agency able to crack down on adverse carrier practices. But House OSRA legislation sponsors Congressmen John Garamendi (D-CA) and Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.), along with several bill co-sponsors, believe FMC strayed from “Congressional intent” of the new law by too broadly defining the criteria for what is considered “unreasonable” refusal by carriers of cargo space accommodations for shippers. The Members believe the law loses all potency because of the FMC’s planned implementation based on their definition. In January 2021, three in four containers offloaded at American ports returned to Asia empty, causing record losses for American exporters and manufacturers.

“The FMC’s current definition of “unreasonable” refusal is so feckless it has us wondering: What was the point of passing OSRA in the first place? We all witnessed the havoc foreign-flagged ocean carriers wreaked on our ports in 2021, price gouging shippers and leaving American exporters high and dry. If this definition stands, they could easily do it again,” said Reps. Garamendi and Johnson.

“This proposed definition is not in line with congressional intent – it needs to be remedied for the sake of our farmers, exporters, and manufacturers who already faced extreme losses at the hands of foreign carriers,” they noted. “The ten largest ocean carriers and three global alliances reportedly control more than 80 percent of the global market,” wrote the Members of Congress. “As American exporters and other businesses navigate this anticompetitive marketplace, they must have an ally in our nation’s only ocean carrier regulator: the Federal Maritime Commission.”

MUCH-MALIGNED P&O CEO IS CONDEMNED AS “WORST BOSS IN THE WORLD”

The world's largest trade union federation has voted hated P&O Ferries CEO Peter Hebblethwaite as the “worst boss in the world,” an ignominious award reserved for insufferable corporate fat cats with little regard for working families. The International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) selected Hebblethwaite over five other nominees who exploit workers through low wages and insecure jobs that deny people’s rights to form and join a union and collectively bargain.

P&O Ferries illegally fired 786 seafarers in March on a pre-recorded Zoom call, a breach of UK laws on consultation and notification. Hebblethwaite shamelessly admitted to breaking the law when questioned by lawmakers, even saying that he would do it again. He is still under investigation by the United Kingdom’s Insolvency Service for potential civil violations and could yet face legal action.

Transport bosses took the first four places in the poll, with Hebblethwaite joined by Amazon Executive Chairman Jeff Bezos, Qantas CEO Alan Joyce and Emirates Airline and Group CEO Ahmed bin Saeed Al Maktoum. Bezos is a former “winner.” The other bad boss nominees included Starbucks CEO Howard Schultz and Hancock Prospecting Chair Gina Rinehart.

ITF General Secretary Stephen Cotton said “CEOs in the transport industry have been put on notice – if you fail to uphold workers’ rights and provide workers with decent jobs, safe working conditions, respect and dignity, the global union movement will be there to hold you to account. We will do this through national and international laws, using the power of worker representatives on pension funds to uphold human and labor rights principles and by organizing transport workers to demand change.”

VACATION BENEFITS – 2022 YEAR-END CLOSING

Apply for Vacation and Port Relief Benefits early to avoid the year-end rush.

- **FILING DEADLINE:** The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2022 in the Outports *and* the Plan Office is Friday, December 16, 2022.
- **DIRECT DEPOSIT:** The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2022 will be made on 12/19/2022 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/21/2022.
- Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/16/22 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/3/2023.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2022 must file before this deadline. Remember, Monday December 26, 2022 and Monday January 2, 2023 are holidays and the Outports

and the Plan Office will be closed. It is always wise to plan ahead, so you should verify the specific holiday schedule with the Plan Office Representative.

Split Your Vacation Payments between 2022 and 2023

You can submit an Application for Vacation Pay prior to the end of the year and request that the payment of your vacation benefits be split. Two checks will be issued to you, one in 2022 and a second in 2023. The 12/16/2022 deadline applies to split claims also. The vacation benefits paid in this manner MUST be a **continuous vacation period**.

Please contact the Vacation Plan staff in Baltimore at 800-811-6322 or 410-547-9111 if you have any questions.

REPORT: BETTER GREEN FUEL INVESTMENT, POLICIES NEEDED TO MEET CLIMATE GOALS

A new University of Manchester report highlights the major role the shipping sector will play in transporting the green fuels necessary to meet global climate goals. But it found a yawning gap between announced government led projects and what is required, calling for the creation of far stronger national policies on low-carbon fuels. The authors of “Shipping’s Role in the Global Energy Transition” identify growth in low-carbon hydrogen and sustainable bioenergy as essential to meet the Paris Climate Agreement’s goals. But they found that a lack of enabling policies from governments, such as guaranteeing markets and prices for producers and consumers, was holding back investment in the shipping infrastructure needed to support the global energy transition. Report researchers called for stronger Government policies to give low-carbon hydrogen producers, shippers and consumers the confidence they need to invest.

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

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

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

Wednesday, December 7 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; **Online HQ “Town Hall” Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thurs. December 8 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.

Friday, December 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. 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.