

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//MSP FY '20 Funding Intact in House, Senate Bills//Chao, Mathur, Others Honored at AOTOS//GREEN LAKE Receives Trio of Awards//Jay Corcoran, Steve Wersé Receive Tribute//Mariners Needed for CG Exam Working Group//WWII Arctic Run Mariners Sought for Anniversary Celebration Next Year//Veterans Day Closings//

MSP FY '20 FUNDING INTACT IN T-HUD BILLS

Legislation to fully fund the Maritime Security Program for Fiscal Year 2020 is now in the hands of House and Senate conferees after both chambers passed Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development (T-HUD) funding bills. The spending bills fund the Transportation Department, Department of Housing and Urban Development, and other related agencies. Importantly each version contains \$300 million for MSP for the upcoming Fiscal Year of 2020. However, lawmakers much reach agreement on how to fund these operations before a November 21st deadline in order to avoid a government shutdown. The duration of a funding extension for the federal government continues to remain unclear as negotiations on Capitol Hill continue.

House and Senate conferees are in the process of reconciling the FY 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), which among other provisions, includes a 10-year re-authorization of the MSP that would extend the Program until FY 2035. While the fate of annual expenditures for the federal government has become uncertain in recent times, funding for the Maritime Security Program is subject to annual appropriations, which means Congress must appropriate these funds year after year to ensure its continued operations. The M.E.B.A. Political Action Fund (PAF) allows the Union to continue educating Members of Congress about the importance of our industry to the economy and national security.

NORFOLK, GOVT. FLEET DEPT. GET BOOST WITH NEW HIRE

M.E.B.A. engineer Ola Lassley recently hung up his boiler suit after a decade with the Military Sealift Command to give some shoreside assistance to the Union. He brings his MSC and Navy background and expertise to the Norfolk Union hall where he will serve as Assistant Government Fleet Representative and also perform Dispatcher duties.

Norfolk Branch Agent/Government Fleet Rep. Tracy Burke is enthused by Ola's addition to the team which will help enhance representation for this important sector. Along with the MSC, the Government Fleet includes mariners sailing for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (USACE). Ola spent 22 years with the U.S. Navy before joining the MSC a decade ago and signing up with the M.E.B.A. The position was last held by Joe Muchulsky who retired earlier this year.

Ola got started this week on Monday morning and dives into the job with great enthusiasm. You'll see him at the Norfolk Dispatch station shipping out members when he's not working on Government Fleet business. Drop in and say hello. Welcome aboard Ola!

DOT SECRETARY CHAO PRESENTED WITH AOTOS AWARD; ATC's MATHUR ALSO HONORED

Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao and Alaska Tanker Company President & CEO Anil Mathur were among four recipients of the maritime industry's most prestigious honor this last week. The United Seamen's Service annually presents Admiral of the Ocean Sea (AOTOS) statuettes to U.S. maritime advocates for lifetime contributions to our industry. Secretary Chao has been a strong supporter of U.S.-flag shipping during her long career of Government service. A former Secretary of Labor, she also chaired the Federal Maritime Commission, and served at the Department of Transportation as Deputy Secretary. In addition, she also served as Deputy Maritime Administrator. She is the daughter of a shipping magnate who emigrated from Taiwan.

"I am honored to have my work over the years recognized by such a distinguished organization and audience," the Secretary told the large AOTOS gathering on Friday evening in New York City. "I understand very well the sacrifices that merchant mariners experience. The men and women in this industry are heroes; I am proud of them and work hard to support them."

ATC's Mathur was another worthy AOTOS recipient at the event. He has run the M.E.B.A.-contracted company since 2001 and has steered the company to success while establishing phenomenal safety and environmental performance records. Other deserving honorees at the event included the President of the Seafarers International Union of Canada James Given, as well as Joseph Pyne who is Chairman of the Board of the Kirby Corporation.

American seafarers were also honored at the ceremony, during this maritime awards season, including the crew of the GREEN LAKE which participated in the rescue of mariners from a burning ship (see related article below). Of interest, among the seafarer recognition was an honor given to officers and crew of the USNS BRUNSWICK, a Military Sealift Command expeditionary fast transport vessel. MSC civilian mariner crews are represented by the M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU. The AOTOS Mariner's Plaque was awarded to the crew revolving around their actions during Super Typhoon Wutip while they were supporting the international mission Pacific Partnership 2019 in Micronesia. "The crew implemented advanced ship handling techniques which were not yet standard to expeditionary fast transport vessels in the Navy inventory as it accepted local boats and personnel alongside to transfer critical supplies and relief workers ashore," the AOTOS audience was informed. "The Engine Department executed maintenance and oversight on water jets to reach maximum mission effectiveness despite austere operating conditions and abnormal use. A rigid hull inflatable boat was coordinated by Deck, Engine and Supply departments, working around navigational hazards and limited local information as it communicated with ashore personnel by manipulating MF/HF and VHF frequencies. Crews manned the boat to transfer personnel and supplies. USNS BRUNSWICK mariners volunteered to go ashore in the disaster zone, distributing donated supplies and clothing to displaced residents. Volunteers joined in cleanup and relief efforts, while still others assisted local boats making their way to the vessel for uploading supplies. Braving currents, weather, waves and unknown hazards in Micronesia, the crew worked round the clock."

GREEN LAKE CREW HONORED THREE TIMES FOR RESCUE

The crew of the M.E.B.A.-contracted Pure Car/Truck Carrier GREEN LAKE basked in the limelight three times in the past two weeks over their role in the dramatic rescue involving a burning Japanese car carrier near Wake Island late last year. The GREEN LAKE's heroic actions began on New Year's Eve 2018 when the U.S.-flag ship responded to a disaster unfolding 2,000 miles northwest of Hawaii. The SINCERITY ACE, a 650-foot car carrier vessel, caught fire, forcing her 21-man crew to abandon ship. Arriving on the scene, the GREEN LAKE encountered a daunting task – locating SINCERITY ACE crew members floating in unforgiving seas spread out across several miles. The GREEN LAKE fought 17- to 20-foot waves and turbulent winds, making lifesaving attempts even more dangerous and challenging. The rescue effort lasted 18 hours, with the GREEN LAKE's entire crew working tirelessly to get survivors onboard. The Waterman Transport-managed GREEN LAKE is made up of M.E.B.A., MM&P and SIU mariners.

On Friday, the Maritime Administration presented the GREEN LAKE the rare and prestigious Gallant Ship Citation Award and the crew of the vessel were presented with U.S. Merchant Marine Medals for Outstanding Achievement. Between 1944 and 1994, only 41 ships received Gallant Ship status, with the last award presented in 1994.

Presenting the award, Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Mark Buzby said, "The GREEN LAKE was there to respond in the time-honored tradition of mariners coming to the aid of fellow mariners. This American-trained crew highlights the professionalism and valor of our nation's mariners, whether conducting humanitarian aid missions or providing vital sustainment to the U.S. Armed Forces."

That very evening, the GREEN LAKE was honored again, this time during the annual Admiral of the Ocean Sea (AOTOS) awards, an event overseen by the United Seamen's Service (USS). The vessel was honored with the AOTOS Mariner's Plaque. Last week, the crew and vessel were honored in a Capitol Hill gold medal ceremony sponsored by the Association for Rescue at Sea (AFRAS) and hosted by Congressmen Sean Patrick Maloney (D-NY) and Bob Gibbs (R-OH).

Waterman Transport Inc. (formerly Central Gulf) manages the vessel which is enrolled in the Maritime Security Program. M.E.B.A. officers onboard the vessel during the incident included C/E Joseph Tierney, 1st A/E Shauna Glasser, 2nd A/E Thomas Pollock and 3rd A/E Maria Asuncion.

The ship's Captain, William Boyce, who represented the crew at all three events, noted that "the entire crew did a truly incredible job under extreme conditions. They showed incredible perseverance, teamwork and determination, constantly improvising with each survivor's recovery in very difficult and dangerous conditions."

JAY CORCORAN, MM&P STEVE WERSE HONORED AT GALA EVENT

Maritime Administrator Rear Admiral Mark Buzby headlined a gala event appreciation of recently-retired MM&P Secretary-Treasurer Capt. Steve Werse as well as M.E.B.A.'s Jay Corcoran, a mariner taken away from us in the September 11, 2001 tragedy. The Captain Richard Phillips Lane Kirkland Maritime Trust sponsored the event that took place on Monday night in Oxon Hill, MD.

M.E.B.A. retiree Mark Engberg, who sailed as Chief Engineer with Capt. Werse for over eight years, attended the event, among other M.E.B.A. and AMC representatives, and delivered heartfelt remarks.

“I couldn’t have asked for a better a Captain to work with,” Mark noted. “He always treated everyone fairly, with respect and kindness... He was an excellent leader, people just like working with him and he tried his best to make going to sea fun. He is a dear friend of mine and my wife Patty; he certainly deserves the recognition for his dedication to MM&P, Fort Schuyler and the maritime industry.” Steve served the maritime industry for over 40 years, as a seagoing officer, union official and member of the U.S. Naval Service.

Mark also paid tribute to Jay Corcoran, a deeply cherished 20-year M.E.B.A. engineer who was only 44 years when he took that fateful flight to rejoin his ship, the APL THAILAND.

The Captain Phillips Fund also recently took over the oversight of the annual Massachusetts golf tournament held in Jay’s honor. The Fund raises scholarship money to benefit those pursuing careers in the maritime industry or related fields.

MARINERS NEEDED FOR CG EXAM WORKING GROUP; 2020 SCHEDULE SET

The National Maritime Center is looking for participants to help review U.S. Coast Guard exam questions at upcoming merchant mariner examination working group meetings. Question reviews are a good opportunity to help the NMC and your fellow mariners make long-term improvements to the exam system.

The Examinations page of the NMC website (accessed at www.uscg.mil/nmc) provides an outline of the process to request membership in the working group. Once on the Examinations page, click “Working Group” to access this information. Requests may be submitted at any time. The following meetings have been scheduled for 2020 to take place at NMC Headquarters in Martinsburg, WV:

Engine working group – February 11-13

Deck working group – March 10-12

Engine working group – April 7-9

Deck working group – July 14-16

Engine working group – September 8-10

Deck working group – October 6-8

Engine working group – November 3-5

You can direct any questions to the email address on the Examinations page, or contact the NMC Customer Service Center using the NMC online chat system, e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

AVOID THE YEAR-END RUSH – APPLY FOR VACATION & PORT RELIEF BENEFITS

The deadline for issuing checks dated in 2019 in the Outports *and* the Plan Office is Tuesday, December 17, 2019. The final Direct Deposit Transfer for 2019 will be made on 12/18/2019 and the funds will be deposited into your bank account on 12/20/2019. Any requests for Port Relief and Vacation checks received after 12/17/19 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid on 1/21/2020.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2019 must file before this deadline. Remember, Wednesday December 25, 2019 and Wednesday January 1, 2020 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 2019 and 2020

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 2019 and a second in 2020. The 12/17/2019 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.

WWII ARCTIC RUN MARINERS SOUGHT FOR 75th ANNIVERSARY CEREMONY

The US-Russia Joint Commission on POW/MIA (USRJC) is seeking mariners who participated in arctic convoys during WWII as part of next year's 75th Anniversary of the end of the war in the European Theater. The USRJC, a Presidential commission, is reaching out to any U.S. Navy and Merchant Marine veterans that took part in war-related Arctic missions. They hope to honor them with a medal during the 75th Anniversary of the End of WWII (V-E Day), an event that will take place in May of next year. Details for the event are still being formalized.

If you know of a mariner who may be able to participate, you are asked to contact the American Merchant Marine Veterans (AMMV) at their Cape Coral, FL Headquarters. You can reach Lynn Kelly, the National Office Administrator, at (475) 470-9200 or email her at ammermarvets@gmail.com

M.E.B.A. HALLS AND OFFICES CLOSED FOR VETERANS DAY

Veterans Day is this Monday, November 11th, and all M.E.B.A. halls and offices will be closed. The day marks the anniversary of the agreement that ended World War I in 1918. Originally known as Armistice Day, it is now celebrated as a day to commemorate all veterans in the U.S. including Merchant Marine veterans.

REGULAR MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Monday, November 4 – Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300;
Tuesday, November 5 – CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230;
Wednesday, November 6 – Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315;
Thursday, November 7 – L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300;
Friday, November 8 – Honolulu@1100.

-----FINISHED WITH ENGINES-----



The M.E.B.A. is the nation's oldest maritime labor union, established in 1875. M.E.B.A.'s expertise and proven 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; mehaq@mebaunion.org. Visit us on Facebook. For publication and related inquiries 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.