MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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TODAY IS THE 250th ANNIVERSARY OF THE MERCHANT MARINE

Today is the Semi-quincentennial of the U.S. Merchant Marine as the "Fourth Arm of Defense" is celebrating its 250th anniversary. The birth of the Merchant Marine is said to have been on June 12, 1775. It hearkens back to the struggle of the 13 colonies to win their independence from Great Britain. Without a strong Navy, the colonies relied on privately-owned commercial ships and their crews to serve as privateers in the tenuous months after our country declared its independence from Mother England.

The "American Merchant Marine at War" website (www.usmm.org) describes the beginnings of the U.S. Merchant Marine when privateers engaged the British schooner MARGARETTA: "Forty men, armed with guns, swords, axes, and pitchforks, headed by Jeremiah O'Brien, on the sloop UNITY and twenty men under the command of Benjamin Foster on a small schooner pursued the MARGARETTA. During the chase they put up planks and other objects to defend themselves against the MARGARETTA's cannon. On June 12, 1775, near Round Island on Machias Bay the patriots crashed into the MARGARETTA and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The British crew was disheartened when their captain was mortally wounded and lost the one-hour long battle. Twenty-five of the combatants were killed or wounded. The victors claimed "four double fortified three pounders and fourteen swivels" and some smaller guns. This was considered the first sea engagement of the Revolution and the start of the Merchant Marine's war role."

The "Fourth Arm of Defense" moniker was coined during World War II by President Franklin D. Roosevelt who had high reverence for mariners. He understood that the Merchant Marine functions as the logistical backbone of the U.S. military, making it indispensable to our military might. While the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps are the direct fighting forces, none of them can function effectively — especially over extended distances or time — without a continuous stream of supplies, equipment, fuel, and reinforcements supplied by our U.S. Merchant Marine.

Our second President John Adams noted that, "No group of individuals did more for establishing our country than the American Merchant Seamen and Privateers. Their record speaks eloquently of their devotion and sacrifices."

World War II Chief of Naval Operations Chester Nimitz, said that, "Not one of us who fought in the late war can forget – nor should any citizen be allowed to forget – that the national resource which enabled us to carry the war to the enemy and fight in his territory and not our own was our Merchant Marine. The fighting fleets and Marines of our Navy, the ground forces of our Army, and the aircraft of both would have been helpless to pound the enemy into defeat overseas, had it not been for the steady stream of personnel, equipment and supplies of every character brought into the rear of the combat areas, and often directly into those areas, by the ships of our own Merchant Marine and those of our allies.... It is well to remember that a professional Army and Navy are merely nuclei of the armed forces needed to wage war.... there is a natural tendency to forget the vital relationship which the Merchant Marine bears to our individual and collective welfare, in peace as well as war."

M.E.B.A. S.I. FERRY MARINERS RESCUE JUMPER

M.E.B.A. mariners aboard the Staten Island Ferry SAMUEL NEWHOUSE helped give a 26-year old man another chance after preventing his passage into Davy Jones' Locker on Sunday morning. At around 8:11 am, the man leapt into the Harbor as the vessel neared Staten Island's St. George Ferry Terminal. The ferry crew immediately sprang into action. Drawing on their training, they threw flotation devices overboard to mark the location where the man had entered the water. In the pilothouse, Captain Ryan Burtchell, pilot Vinny Pedulla, first mate Joe Esposito, and deck officers Tim McCan, and Perry Iyampilla coordinated a rapid response — contacting the U.S. Coast Guard and alerting nearby vessels via radio. They also worked with the NYPD to dispatch a harbor unit to assist in the search.

M.E.B.A. NY/NJ Patrolman Capt. Kenny Smith recounted that the crew was able to visually locate the flailing jumper and maneuvered the vessel close-by. The Brooklyn harbor unit was alerted and in coordination with the ferry crew, was able to pluck the man from a watery death. The rescued man was taken to a local hospital and was reported in stable condition. Captain Smith emphasized that the crew's preparedness made all the difference.

He noted that the ferry crews train regularly and take their safety drills seriously. In situations like this, he said, immediate notification is key. If they see it happen or are told right away, the chances of a successful rescue are extremely high. Every member of the ferry crew is certified in CPR and trained to use a defibrillator, he noted. Smith also acknowledged a grim reality: most overboard incidents on the Staten Island Ferry tend to be deliberate. Smith urged ferry passengers to remain aware of their surroundings and report anything concerning. If someone sees something unusual, they should let a crew member know. They will monitor it and respond quickly.

INT'L MARITIME WORKER GROUPS TACKLE MARINER CRIMINALIZATION

The maritime industry faces an urgent challenge: the increasing criminalization and unjust treatment of seafarers. Despite being vital to global trade, seafarers often face unjust criminal charges related to issues such as smuggling, cargo discrepancies or accidents, frequently without adequate legal protections or fair investigations. In response, a landmark event convened by the International Maritime Organization (IMO), International Labour Organization (ILO), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), and the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF), will bring together leaders from across the maritime industry to drive solutions that ensure fair treatment and protect the rights of seafarers worldwide. The event, titled "Protecting seafarers against criminalization: what more can be done?", will take place on Monday, June 16 from 10:00 AM to 5:30 pm at IMO headquarters in London, with a live stream available via IMO's YouTube channel. At www.youtube.com/IMOHQ

HOUSE PASSES BILLS TO EXPAND CARGO PREFERENCE, STRENGTHEN MARITIME SUPPLY CHAIN

This week, the House of Representatives approved several pieces of legislation to strengthen the U.S. supply chain and bolster U.S.-flag shipping. Importantly, among the bills that passed was the M.E.B.A.-supported H.R. 2035. The bipartisan legislation, titled the American Cargo for American Ships Act, would expand cargo preference to 100% for all non-defense government cargo for U.S.-flag vessels. It was introduced by Reps. Salud Carbajal (D-CA) and Mike Ezell (R-MS).

"American cargo transported on American ships strengthens our economy, creates jobs, and protects our supply chains from external threats," said Rep. Carbajal. "My bipartisan bill will strengthen the U.S. shipping fleet by ensuring that taxpayer-funded cargo is moved on U.S.-flagged ships."

"This is a major victory for American workers, our national security, and our economy," Rep. Ezell said. "…A strong U.S.-flagged fleet means a more secure and self-reliant America."

Other maritime related measures approved include:

H.R. 2390, the Maritime Supply Chain Security Act – introduced by Rep. David Rouzer (R-NC). The bill strengthens security and operations at U.S. ports by clarifying that Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP) funds can be used to replace port crane hardware and software of Chinese origin.

H.R. 252, the Secure Our Ports Act of 2025 – introduced by Rep. Ken Calvert (R-CA). The bill bolsters our national security by prohibiting certain foreign entities, including state-owned enterprises of China, Russia, North Korea, and Iran, from entering into contracts for the ownership, leasing, or operation of U.S. port facilities that are subject to security plans.

The bills were forwarded to the Senate for consideration.

USTR COMMENT PERIOD ON REVISED SECTION 301 ACTION ON UNFAIR CHINESE PRACTICES

The Office of the United States Trade Representative announced a public comment period to consider proposed modifications to announced Section 301 measures designed to strengthen American shipbuilding and counter China's maritime practices. The revised measures are somewhat softer than the USTR proposal originally released in February and take into account some of the concerns aired by industry stakeholders that worried of potential supply chain disruptions.

Among the suggested updates for car carriers, one notable shift is the move to calculate fees based on net tonnage rather than car equivalent units (CEUs). Additionally, the proposal exempts U.S.-flagged and U.S.-owned vessels participating in the Maritime Security Program (MSP), as well as U.S. Government vessels and shipments, from the proposed fees.

M.E.B.A. has been supportive of the USTR's proposal to restrict the influence of Chinese-built vessels and Chinese operators in U.S. maritime trade. The Union notes that carefully implemented countermeasures could help stimulate significant investment in the American maritime industrial base, and revive shipbuilding and fleet expansion efforts within the United States.

The Federal Register notice can be viewed here. Comments in response to this notice can be submitted or accessed here.

INFERNO ON INDIAN CONTAINERSHIP

A major fire aboard the Singapore-flagged MV WAN HAI 503 has left four crew members missing after explosions rocked the vessel about 130 nautical miles northwest of Kochi, India earlier this week. The incident forced the 22-member crew to abandon ship; 18 have been rescued, including five injured — one critically. The missing include nationals from Taiwan, Myanmar, and Indonesia. The Indian Coast Guard launched a large-scale firefighting and rescue mission involving ships, aircraft, and helicopters. Around 40 containers fell into the Arabian Sea during the chaos, and the vessel remains adrift with heavy smoke and interior fires still burning, particularly near its fuel tanks.

Owned by a Singapore-based unit of Taiwan's Wan Hai Line, the vessel continues to pose environmental and safety concerns. Authorities are working to stabilize the ship, with efforts underway to establish a towline and move it away from the coastline. The cause of the fire and the contents of the affected containers have not yet been disclosed.

LAST WEEKS TO SIGN UP FOR THE JUNE 27
CAA-M.E.B.A. PICNIC/150th CELEBRATION

The entire M.E.B.A. membership, active and retired, and especially Calhoon graduates, are invited to the Calhoon Alumni Association (CAA) Reunion scheduled for June 27-29 at the Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The weekend will also include a celebration of the M.E.B.A.'s 150th anniversary. The Union is in its 150th year as of February 23 and there will be much rejoicing. Information, event fees, and registration forms are on the CMES website located at www.mebaschool.org. Look for the CAA page link.

The weekend kicks off with the traditional Golf Tournament on Friday, June 27 at 1000. There will be an evening muster at the Calhoon Saloon later that evening. The party on the Manor House Lawn will take place all day Saturday, June 28. This is a great family event that you should be sure to sign up for. Direct any questions to caa@mebaschool.org and check out the School website to get the complete lowdown. Take this opportunity to spread the word throughout the M.E.B.A. world as well as to past Calhoon School cadets, instructors, shipmates, friends, and families.

GOVT. FLEET MARINERS URGED TO AVOID LOSING UNION PROTECTION

MSC and Army Corps mariners will LOSE all future union protections and benefits if their dues lapse. The Union will continue to provide critical safeguards and exclusive pathways to essential benefits that our Government Fleet mariners expect. Continued membership is a lifeline to maintain the collective strength needed to preserve fair treatment and help protect your sailing career during uncertain times.

MSC and Army Corps members are urged to check in with our Norfolk Union hall to verify contact information and speak with our Government Fleet Representatives who are keeping the fleet apprised of the latest developments. Affected members should check in with M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Representative Craig Moran at the Norfolk Union hall at (757) 440-1820 or govtfleet@mebaunion.org. Assistant Representative Ola Lassley can be reached at the same number

or via email at Norfolkdispatcher@mebaunion.org. M.E.B.A. Government Fleet Reps. continue to contact mariners as well, and will be visiting ships to help them understand their options.

Members in those fleets should maintain their good standing by using M.E.B.A.'s online payment portal at https://meba.workingsystems.com. The Membership Department at Headquarters can provide assistance with any technical issues by phone at (202) 638-5355 or via email at membership@mebaunion.org. Those enrolling in the M.E.B.A. Payment Portal must have an email address on file with Headquarters that correlates to their payment portal i.d., so make sure the HQ records match. Payments can also be made in person at any M.E.B.A. Union hall or office. To ensure continuity, members are advised to complete payments through the fourth quarter.

HALLS CLOSED THURSDAY FOR JUNETEENTH

The M.E.B.A. halls and offices are closed next week on Thursday, June 19 to observe Juneteenth/Emancipation Day. Juneteenth, which symbolically commemorates the end of slavery in the United States, has been celebrated in Texas for years. It was made a national holiday four years ago. The observance hearkens back to 1865 when Major General Gordon Granger and his Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas and ordered the enforcement of the Emancipation Proclamation, which took place 2 ½ years earlier. Granger announced that "all persons held as slaves" in the Lone Star State were "thenceforward, and forever free."

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

Monday, July 7 – **Boston**@1200. *Bloody Thursday observed – West Coast Halls Closed*
Tuesday, July 8 – **CMES**@1430; **Charleston**@1400; **Houston**@1315; **Oakland**@1230; Seattle (Fife)@1300.
Wednesday, July 9 – **Jacksonville**@1300; **New Orleans**@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@**1300 **(No Voting) – Register by emailing** mebahq@mebaunion.org
Thursday, July 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@**1230; **NY/NJ@**1300; **Norfolk@**1300; **Tampa@**1300.
Friday, July 11 – **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 Calhoon 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