MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)

"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"

M.E.B.A. TELEX TIMES

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THE "BIG U" SLEEPS WITH THE FISHES

The SS UNITED STATES, the legendary ocean liner that once represented the pinnacle of American maritime engineering and speed, has made her final voyage. The historic vessel was deliberately sunk Wednesday off the Florida panhandle, beginning a new chapter as what is expected to become the world's largest artificial reef. Her final resting place is about 25 nautical miles southwest of Destin-Fort Walton Beach. For those who sailed aboard her, worked in her engine rooms, or simply followed her remarkable history, the news brings a measure of sadness. The "Big U" was more than a ship. She was a symbol of American ingenuity, national pride and the skilled American mariners who kept her moving.

That connection runs deep within the M.E.B.A. During the liner's heyday in the 1950s and 1960s, M.E.B.A. officers filled both engine rooms, playing a vital role in operating one of the most technologically advanced passenger ships ever built. Her powerful machinery helped propel her to a speed record that has stood for generations. On her 1952 maiden voyage, the 990-foot liner shattered the transatlantic speed record, crossing from New York to Bishop Rock off Cornwall in just 3 days, 10 hours and 40 minutes. She captured the prestigious Blue Riband for the fastest westbound Atlantic crossing, a distinction she still holds. The Big U carried four U.S. presidents — Harry Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Bill Clinton — along with foreign dignitaries, Hollywood stars, business leaders, military officials and thousands of everyday Americans and immigrants. Her career came to an end in 1969, but efforts to find a new purpose for the vessel continued for decades.

For years, the SS United States Conservancy fought to preserve the ship as a museum and national landmark. After years of unsuccessful redevelopment proposals and mounting financial pressures, that dream ultimately gave way to a plan to transform the liner into an artificial reef rather than see her dismantled for scrap. The $13.5 million project, organized by Okaloosa County, Florida, and its contractors, culminated Wednesday night when the vessel finally slipped beneath the Gulf waters in the darkness around 9 pm. Crews prepared the ship by removing hazardous materials, opening sections of the decks and removing more than 400 portholes. Her two iconic smokestacks were also removed and are expected to become part of a future museum honoring the liner.

The ship rests in approximately 180 feet of water, with her upper decks accessible to divers. At 990 feet long, she surpasses the USS ORISKANY, the former aircraft carrier sunk off Pensacola in 2006, to become the largest vessel ever deliberately sunk as an artificial reef. It is an unusual final chapter for a ship that once carried America's flag across the Atlantic at record-breaking speed. But while the Big U will no longer cross oceans, her steel hull will provide a new home for marine life and a destination for generations of divers and fishing enthusiasts.

For the M.E.B.A. officers who stood watch in her engine rooms, and the many members who remember what she represented, there will undoubtedly be a tear shed as the news sinks in. The ship that once embodied the strength of American maritime engineering has taken her final watch beneath the waves. Her legacy, however, remains very much afloat.

CONGRESSIONAL LABOR CAUCUS UNVEILS
PRO-WORKER AGENDA FOR NEW CONGRESS

The Congressional Labor Caucus outlined an ambitious pro-worker agenda Tuesday during a gathering outside the U.S. Capitol, signaling its priorities as Democrats prepare for a new majority in Congress. Rep. Debbie Dingell (D-MI), co-chair of the caucus, criticized the current administration's attacks on working people and emphasized the need to strengthen workers' rights to organize, collectively bargain and secure first contracts. The caucus, joined by AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler, unveiled its Pro-Worker Path Forward, a vision centered on raising wages and benefits, creating good-paying American jobs, improving workplace safety and putting workers ahead of corporate profits. Other labor leaders attending included M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha who took part in the event along with M.E.B.A.'s Government Affairs Director Erick Siahaan, and representatives of the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) and Seafarers International Union (SIU).

The caucus's four co-chairs - Reps. Dingell, Reps. Steven Horsford (NV), Donald Norcross (NJ) and Mark Pocan (WI) - stressed that organized labor must remain central to the Democratic agenda, pledging to fight for workers in every sector and ensure they have a meaningful voice both on the job and in Congress. With strong public support for unions, the caucus sees the upcoming Congress as an opportunity to advance policies that empower working people, protect collective bargaining rights and ensure that economic growth translates into better opportunities for American workers.

WHITE HOUSE CONSIDERS ANOTHER JONES ACT WAIVER
EXTENSION AHEAD OF SUNDAY DEADLINE

With the current temporary Jones Act waiver set to expire on Sunday, November 15, the White House is actively considering an additional extension that could be announced as soon as tomorrow, according to industry reports. The potential move comes as the administration weighs competing pressures from energy markets and the domestic shipbuilding sector following more than eight months of emergency exemptions. U.S. maritime leaders are warning that extending the policy further is actively chilling capital investment. In recent remarks following another push to encourage the administration to let the waiver lapse, the American Maritime Partnership (AMP) emphasized that prolonged regulatory uncertainty is driving away the lenders needed to recapitalize the U.S. fleet.

"The investment community, the financiers, the people who are key to capital for investment, are spooked," AMP stated, adding that building more ships in America requires long-term confidence that domestic trades will remain in domestic hands.

Industry participants note that the ongoing ambiguity has already delayed billions in planned vessel construction and shipyard expansions, arguing that existing statutory provisions are sufficient for true case-by-case emergencies. With an announcement potentially arriving within 24 hours, shipyards, mariners, and maritime financiers are bracing to see whether coastwise protections will be restored this weekend or extended once again.

DOZENS OF M.E.B.A. SHIPS HONORED FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY

A huge list of vessels sailing under the management of M.E.B.A.-contracted companies were honored for excellent environmental records at an event in Washington D.C. on Wednesday night. The Chamber of Shipping of America (CSA) doles out annual Environmental Achievement Awards for vessels and crews operating in U.S. waters that put together a string of years with no reportable spills, no MARPOL citations and no violations of pollution regulations. M.E.B.A. President Adam Vokac was in attendance at the event and was pleased to congratulate our contracted companies and attending mariners in person. The awards dinner, presided over by new CSA President and CEO Sean Kline, attracts high-level Coast Guard, Maritime Administration, EPA and other government agency personnel as well as officials from the contracted companies and the mariners that sail upon the vessels. MarAd Deputy Administrator Mark Johnson and AMO President Willie Barrere were also in attendance, among others.

M.E.B.A. contracted companies with vessels receiving awards included Chevron, Keystone, Liberty, Matson, OSG (including Alaska Tanker Company) and Pasha. In large part, company officials accepted the awards at the event on behalf of their vessels and crews but Keystone Shipping sent a contingent of mariners to accept their deserved honors in person including M.E.B.A. Captain Chris Jones. Many more M.E.B.A. companies and vessels have actually achieved the qualifications demanded to receive these awards. However, the committee sometime are not made aware of other vessels if a nomination form is not filled out for them. The awards are available to all owners and operators, whether or not a CSA member. The Board encourages all vessel owners and operators to nominate their compliant vessels.

NMC ISSUES NAVITA POST-LAUNCH ASSISTANCE

The National Maritime Center (NMC) recently launched the Navita credentialing portal providing mariners with a secure online option to submit applications and communicate with the NMC. To support mariners following the launch, the NMC has developed additional resources, including a new Navita video tutorial, to help users navigate common tasks within the portal.

Navita Video Tutorial: The new video tutorial provides a guided walkthrough of Navita and demonstrates how to: Sign in and get started.; Submit merchant mariner credential (MMC) and medical certificate applications.; Upload required supporting documentation; Check the initial status of an application. • Submit additional information requested by the NMC; and Create and follow up on a case. *You can watch the tutorial here:* Navita Video Tutorial

Additional Navita resources are available to assist mariners. The Navita User Guide and knowledge articles provide step-by-step instructions for completing common tasks, while the NMC website provides information about credentialing requirements and NMC processes. For ongoing updates, sign up for the NMC list server. For questions, contact our Customer Service Center via Navita, NMC online chat system, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

U.S. EXTENDS SUSPENSION OF CHINA MARITIME FEES THROUGH JANUARY 9

The Trump administration has formally extended its suspension of port fees targeting Chinese-built and Chinese-operated vessels for another two months, keeping the measures on hold as trade negotiations with Beijing continue. The extension, published Tuesday in the *Federal Register,* took effect November 9 and keeps the fees suspended through 11:59 p.m. EST on January 9, 2027. Unless further action is taken, the measures could resume January 10.

The fees originated from a 2024 U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Section 301 investigation into China's maritime, logistics and shipbuilding practices. The original action imposed fees on vessels operated by Chinese companies, Chinese-owned vessels and Chinese-built ships operated by non-Chinese carriers. The measures were suspended for one year under a November 2025 trade agreement between President Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping, with both countries agreeing to suspend related port charges. The latest extension provides Washington and Beijing additional time to negotiate, but leaves the future of the U.S. measures unresolved.

IMO CONDEMNS ATTACKS ON COMMERCIAL SHIPPING, MOURNS 25th SEAFARER FATALITY

The Council of the International Maritime Organization (IMO) has strongly condemned attacks on commercial shipping since the U.S./Israel war on Iran began in late February and reiterated the need to protect seafarers amid escalating global threats to maritime security. Meeting November 2–6 in London for its 138th session, the Council denounced Houthi attacks on merchant vessels and crews in the Red Sea and Bab al-Mandab Strait, as well as Russian attacks on merchant ships, mariners and maritime infrastructure supporting Ukraine's Black Sea shipping corridor. It also raised concerns over increasing piracy and armed robbery in the Western Indian Ocean and Gulf of Aden.

The Council also mourned the death of another mariner following the November 5 attack on the M/T VELOS SAPPHIRE in the Strait of Hormuz. The fatality brought the confirmed number of seafarer deaths since the outbreak of the Middle East conflict to 25. The IMO has verified at least 130 attacks against commercial vessels in the region, with thousands of mariners remaining at risk, including crews trapped aboard ships in the Persian Gulf. IMO Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez emphasized that seafarers must never become casualties of geopolitical disputes over which they have no control. He cited continuing deaths, injuries, abandonment and the denial of basic necessities and repatriation among the hardships facing mariners. The Council called on governments to refrain from unlawful actions that jeopardize international shipping and the safety of crews, reaffirming that vital maritime routes must remain open and secure. The IMO also pledged to explore additional measures to prevent further loss of life.

VACATION BENEFITS - 2026 YEAR-END CLOSING

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

- **FILING DEADLINE: Port Relief Claims** - The deadline for issuing Port Relief checks dated in 2026 in the Plan Office is Friday, December 18, 2026.
  Vacation Claims - The deadline for issuing Vacation checks dated in 2026 in the Plan Office is Thursday, December 24, 2026.

- **DIRECT DEPOSIT: Port Relief Claims -** The final Port Relief Direct Deposit Transfer for 2026 will be made on 12/21/2026 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/23/2026.

Vacation Claims - The final Vacation Direct Deposit Transfer for 2026 will be made on 12/28/2026 and the funds will be deposited into bank accounts on 12/30/2026.

- Any requests for Port Relief checks received after 12/18/26 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/4/2027.
- Any requests for Vacation checks received after 12/24/26 at 12:00 PM EST will be paid in the order received beginning 1/4/2027.

Any member who requires that his/her check be dated in 2026 must file before this deadline. Remember, Friday, December 25, 2026, and Friday, January 1, 2027, are holidays and the Plan Office will be closed.

Split Your Vacation Payments between 2026 and 2027

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 2026 and a second in 2027. The 12/24/2026 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 Vacation@mebaplans.org or by phone at 800-811-6322 if you have any questions.

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS *(All times are local)*
Monday, December 7 – **Boston**@1200; **Seattle (Fife)**@*1100*.
Tuesday, December 8 – **CMES**@1430; **Charleston**@1400; **Houston**@1315; **Oakland**@1230; **Portland, Maine**@1200.
Wednesday, December 9 – **Jacksonville**@1300; **New Orleans**@1315; **Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@**1300 **(No Voting) – Register by emailing** mebahq@mebaunion.org
Thursday, December 10 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@**1230; **NY/NJ@**1300; **Norfolk@**1300; **Tampa@**1300.
Friday, December 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 untivaled 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 mebaschool.org. M.E.B.A. Plans is at (410) 547-9111 or www.mebaplans.org