



# SEAFARERS LOG

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION – ATLANTIC, GULF, LAKES AND INLAND WATERS, AFL-CIO

## Seafarers Uphold Decades-Long Tradition Of Delivering in Operation Deep Freeze

SIU members helped ensure the success of the most recent iteration of Operation Deep Freeze, the annual resupply mission to the scientific outpost at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. Sailing aboard the tanker *Stena Polaris* (Intrepid) were Seafarers (below, from left) AB Tyler Brown, ABM Harriet Groenleer, Pumpman Rayshawn Buksha, QMED Diamond Jackson, Chief Cook Anthony Jackson, SA Tahj Ligon, Wiper Abdelhamid Deka, Chief Steward Xavier Burgos, QMED Adam Ferkula, and AB Dylan Wright. *Page 20 (back page).*



## Paul Hall Center Hosts USTRANSCOM Commander



The SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education on March 9 hosted Gen. Randall Reed (USAF), commanding officer of the U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM), along with other personnel from the agency. Gen. Reed met with union and school officials as well as students. He is at left in each of these photos: addressing an AB class, checking out a simulator with SIU Exec. VP Augie Tellez, and leading the way to the Michael J. Sacco Media Center, with SIU President David Heindel in the foreground. USTRANSCOM supports 10 other U.S. combatant commands, including the U.S. Military Sealift Command.



## We Will Answer the Call



David Heindel

As of this writing in early March, Operation Epic Fury hasn't resulted in any vessel activations. Nevertheless, the SIU has had both direct and indirect involvement, and stands ready for whatever will be needed.

You may have read about the Seafarers-contracted tanker *Stena Imperative* being hit while in drydock overseas. We were a few days from re-crewing the ship when the attack took place, but there already were members of the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers (AMO) on board. Thank heaven, there were no injuries, and the vessel damage didn't seem extensive.

Mariners aboard another one of our ships in that region were near the location where a missile splashed down, but there were no injuries and no vessel damage.

If you are currently in the Persian Gulf, know that all U.S. maritime unions remain united in support of U.S. mariners and are in close contact with your companies, MARAD, and the Department of Defense. Together, we are working to ensure your concerns are heard and to represent the interests of U.S. mariners.

There is some debate about whether, in this age of connectivity, the old saying "loose lips sink ships" still applies. What I say with certainty is that the SIU will not intentionally publicize anything that puts our mariners, our military personnel, or any of our other fellow citizens at risk. No one knows how long Operation Epic Fury will last or whether our members will be called upon. Regardless of how it plays out, we will be judicious in our communications, just as we've been during previous military engagements. Similarly, I urge our members to avoid posting anything online that could make you or anyone else a target.

With equal confidence, and as I mentioned last month in my formal report to the SIU membership, I know that if we are asked to mobilize, we will do what American mariners have always done. We will sail, and we will deliver the

goods. We will support our troops professionally, safely, and proudly. That is not about politics. It's who we are.

If you happen to be new to our industry, I offer this quick history lesson: From the Revolutionary War to World War II, to operations in Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan, our U.S. merchant ships – crewed by American-citizen mariners – have carried the cargo, fuel, equipment, and supplies that make military operations possible. You could say it's in the SIU's DNA, as our union was chartered in late 1938, and our members sailed in World War II beginning just a few short years later.

Wars are not sustained by weapons alone; they are sustained by logistics. And logistics move by sea. This moment underscores why commitments like the Maritime Security Program (MSP) are not optional, they are essential. The MSP provides a ready commercial sealift capacity the military depends upon in times of crisis. Sealift readiness is not something you build overnight. It requires stable cargo policy, sustained investment, and a strong pool of qualified U.S. mariners.

Indirectly, the current military operation also reinforces why cargo preference laws and domestic cargo policy matter. Without cargo, there are no ships. Without ships, there are no jobs. And without U.S.-flag capacity in peacetime commerce, there is no assured sealift in wartime. There is bipartisan recognition of these facts, as well as unwavering support from our military leaders, which is why I remain optimistic about a resurgence of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Meanwhile, consistent with past practice, your union has appropriately secured extra compensation for Seafarers who sail into high-risk waters. All the details were sent to the hiring halls and to the ships early last month. Check with your port agent if you missed it and are interested in the specifics.

Finally, while the *Seafarers LOG* retains an important role in our union community, it of course isn't our only medium. Please keep an eye on our website and our social media pages for timely updates, and if you're not already signed up for SIU text alerts (we've offered them for about 15 years), you can do so via our home page.

The SIU stands ready to uphold our role as part of the nation's fourth arm of defense.

## Nearly Half a Million Workers Unionized in 2025 Annual BLS Report Shows Growth in Union Representation

New data released Feb. 18 by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) shows union representation grew by 463,000 in 2025, bringing the total number of workers represented by union contracts to 16.5 million. Thanks to years of sustained organizing, 11.2% of all wage and salary workers in the United States are now covered under union contracts, up from 2024 and the highest in 16 years.

"Billionaire bosses and union-busting politicians have tried to throw the kitchen sink at working people and their unions – slashing our jobs and rigging the rules to scare us out of organizing – but they are failing," said AFL-CIO President Liz Shuler. "Working people are experiencing relentless attacks on our freedoms and our livelihoods. These numbers confirm what we've seen in the labor movement: Workers ... are hungry to take back their power. Workers know that the best check on a bad boss is a strong union contract. In 2026, workers will continue to organize in every corner of the country and build power to fight for the lives they deserve."

Shuler added, "Labor is one of the last institutions in this country that working people actually trust. Nearly 70% of Americans support unions and more than 50 million more workers are eager to join one, but broken labor law still has the deck stacked against

them. Too many face vicious union-busting and retaliation for organizing and punishing lay-offs even as corporate bosses rake in profits."

"Unionization grew in 2025 despite the nation's broken system of labor law and the most anti-union president in history," said Heidi Shierholz, president of the labor-backed Economic Policy Institute and a former Labor Department chief economist. "And in response to the Trump administration's aggressive attacks on federal employees and their unions, federal workers increasingly turned to collective representation. This increase is a testament to working people's resolve and the fact that unions are recognized as critical instruments for building a fair economy."

According to the report, there was, as usual, a big earnings gap between union members and their non-union colleagues. The median weekly earnings for all workers – the point where half the workforce is above and half below – was \$1,204 last year, a \$45 increase over 2024.

But unionists had median weekly earnings of \$1,484 and union men had median weekly earnings last year of \$1,487, almost \$200 more than non-union men. Union women had median weekly earnings of \$1,297.

The median for unrepresented workers was \$1,174 overall, up \$36 in a year. Non-union men had a median of \$1,289, up \$48 in a year, while non-union women had a median of \$1,056.

The BLS data also reflects the following:

- Years of organizing in new industries, workplaces and in so-called "right to work (for less)" states in the South have pushed nationwide union density to 10%.
- Nearly half of all union growth came from Southern states, with younger workers organizing at a rapid pace.
- The number of public sector workers represented by a union grew by 236,000, up to 36.4% of that workforce.

• Despite what has been described as the biggest act of union-busting in history, union density among federal workers grew to more than 31%, which is the largest single-year increase since 2011, as workers responded to DOGE-driven attacks aimed at stripping

away collective bargaining rights and driving experts out of their jobs.

• Private-sector union representation grew to add 227,000 workers, with significant gains in health care, retail, education services and construction.

"Politicians face a clear mandate to stand up to union-busting bosses, whether they are in the corner office or the oval office," Shuler added. "We call on Congress to pass the Protecting the Right to Organize (PRO) Act and the Public Service Freedom to Negotiate Act, and to reverse the single largest act of union-busting in American history by passing the Protect America's Workforce Act in the Senate."

According to the Press Associates Union News Service, some of the state-level data should be taken with a proverbial grain of salt.

"The state samples of unionists are much smaller than the national sample BLS uses for its top-line number," the service reported. "But though the numbers should be taken with caution, the state pattern remained the same: Union members were concentrated in the Northeast, around the Great Lakes and in the Pacific Coast states, including Alaska and Hawaii. But ... half the numerical gains last year occurred in states of the old Confederacy alone."

Hawaii (24.8%) was the most union-dense state last year, beating New York (21.3%), though New York is catching up in density and also added 128,000 union members last year, rising to 1.734 million. Washington state was notable for big hikes in union both density and numbers. Its density rose from 16% in 2024 to 18% last year. Union numbers increased there by 84,000.

California was high in density (14.9%) and led the nation in numbers both years: 2.489 million unionists in 2025, 108,000 more than in 2024. New York was second in numbers last year, too, at 1.834 million. Illinois, which has the right to organize in its state constitution, added 24,000 union members, rising to 758,000, the BLS estimated. That kept it at 13.1% density.

Alaska was third in density, the BLS estimated, at 18.1%. Also high on the 2025 list were Connecticut and Rhode Island (16.1% each), Massachusetts (14.5%), Minnesota (14.1%), Michigan (13%), New Jersey (14.7%), Oregon (15.1%), Nevada (13%), Ohio (11.6%) and Pennsylvania (10.9%).

For the first time in decades, the two Carolinas did not vie for last in union density. South Dakota "beat" them both, falling to 2.3%. The two Carolinas finished below 3% each, though.

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The SIU engaged an environmentally friendly printer for the production of this newspaper.



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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### Maritime Unions Issue Joint Statement Following Attack on U.S.-Flag Vessel Amid Rising Gulf Tension

Washington, D.C. – The American Maritime Officers (AMO), the American Radio Association (ARA), the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), the Marine Fireman's Union (MFW), the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MM&P), the Seafarers International Union (SIU), and the Sailors Union of the Pacific (SUP), released the following statement in response to escalating disruptions to U.S.-flag vessel operations in the Persian Gulf:

*"For more than 250 years, the United States Merchant Marine has successfully delivered the cargoes essential to our nation's economy, security, and global trade. Today, American mariners continue that proud tradition while operating in increasingly dangerous regions around the world."*

*"Our unions are working closely with vessel management, U.S. military leaders, and the federal government to safeguard American mariners operating in the Persian Gulf and throughout the Middle East. We remain committed to continued coordination with all stakeholders until the safety and security of U.S.-flag vessels and their civilian crews can be fully assured."*

*"American mariners deserve the strongest possible protection as they carry out missions vital to our nation's economic and strategic interests. We will continue to advocate for robust measures that ensure the safety of American crews and vessels during this period of heightened risk."*

###

Editor's note: The ship mentioned in the headline of the joint statement above is the Stena Imperative. No SIU members were aboard the vessel when it was damaged in a Bahrain shipyard. Please see SIU President David Heindel's column in this edition of the LOG for more information on how the conflict with Iran may affect U.S.-flag shipping. We will post any newsworthy updates on the SIU website and in future editions of the LOG.

## White House Issues Maritime Action Plan

The White House in February posted the "America's Maritime Action Plan," a strategic document mandated by last year's executive order titled Restoring America's Maritime Dominance.

In a letter to President Trump, SIU President David Heindel thanked him for backing the industry and conveyed the union's strong backing of the Maritime Action Plan.

"Our support for the Maritime Action Plan is unwavering," Heindel wrote. "We look forward to working with you and your administration to help achieve its goals.... There is no doubt it will take great effort to implement the many components of the Maritime Action Plan, but we are confident that, collectively, we are all up to the task."

In his report to the membership for the March meetings, Heindel said the plan "is comprehensive and contains many components we support, but none of it is likely to be enacted anytime soon. For better or worse, that's how things work in Washington. I should also mention that there weren't really any bombshells in the plan. It is largely consistent with the executive order and also with the SHIPS for America Act."

Broadly, the plan includes four main segments, each one addressing a different aspect of the industry. They are as follows: shipbuilding; workforce education and training; the maritime industrial base; and, national and economic security.

Among other goals, the shipbuilding section includes a universal fee for foreign-built vessels entering U.S. ports. It

recommends "stimulation of U.S.-flag fleet growth" and specifically mentions operating subsidies, guaranteed cargo, and a "vehicle for procuring Strategic Commercial Fleet" ships.

The second section emphasizes the modernization of the credentialing process, including the removal of redundant processes and requirements.

The plan further calls for incentives for maritime workforce recruitment and retention, including "new financial assistance programs" designed to encourage entering and staying in the industry. The incentives would be provided both for the entities who are handling the training, and to students in exchange for service obligations.

Additionally, the plan calls for modified tax treatment of a merchant mariner's foreign-earned income. It would permit the income a U.S. merchant mariner earns while employed on a U.S.-flag vessel operating on an international route to be excluded from gross income under the provisions that permit such an exclusion for U.S. citizens or residents living abroad.

Existing maritime staples including the cargo preference and the Maritime Security Program receive strong backing in the plan, which also calls for establishing a "Maritime Trust Fund" and recapitalizing the Ready Reserve Force.

The Maritime Action Plan says the administration is working on legislative proposals for all of these things.

The entire document is linked on the SIU website.

The SIU recently voiced its strong support when the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced a major purchase of U.S. food that will be transported on U.S.-flag vessels as part of the Title II PL 480 Food for Peace Program. This is the first large procurement of commodities since the Food for Peace function was transferred from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to USDA by the Trump administration.

"PL 480 food aid cargoes are traditionally the largest source of non-defense preference cargo carried by U.S.-flag ships," said SIU President David Heindel. "After more than a year of uncertainty following the closure of USAID, the ships in our fleet that depended on PL 480 cargo were in jeopardy of being lost. This new purchase should help ensure those ships remain in our fleet, and our mariners who crew them remain at work."

The USDA announced an agreement to purchase up to \$432 million in mixed commodities to support our diplomatic efforts abroad, specifically combating food insecurity and in support of emergency food relief in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Haiti, Kenya, and Rwanda. Under federal law, at least 50% of all foreign aid cargoes shipped by the government must be carried on U.S.-flag ships.

The SIU has supported legislation and advocacy efforts to move the Food for Peace program to the USDA, which has handled other in-kind food aid programs for more than half a century. In late December, an interagency agreement gave PL 480 responsibility to the USDA, and the USDA responded quickly to turn that responsibility into action.

Heindel added, "We look forward to working with the president, USDA Secretary Brooke Rollins, Undersecretary for Trade & Foreign Affairs Luke Lindberg, and the rest of the USDA staff as they ensure that American foreign food aid shipments resume, and this vital tool of American diplomacy is put to work again. The men and women of the SIU stand ready to assist in delivering this aid, as we have for nearly 75 years."



In the photo above (from left to right): SIU Port Agent Mario Torrey, AMO Assistant Vice President for Government Relations Alaina Basciano Carouge, MEBA Government Affairs Manager Caitlyn Tierney, AMO East Coast Representative Marissa Cap, SIU Asst. VP Michael Russo, Political and Legislative Director Brian Schoeneman, Exec. VP Augie Tellez, Great Lakes Maritime Academy Cadet Peyton Abney, AMO National President Willie Barerre, Pasha Hawaii's Matt Campbell, CMA CGM Senior Vice President of Government Relations Dick Balzano, Mass Maritime Superintendent Francis McDonald and Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski.

## 'What True Heroes Can Look Like'

During a high-profile event spanning three days in February, a prominent American maritime spokesperson shared her genuine enthusiasm for the U.S. Merchant Marine – and she assured the aspiring mariners in attendance that they are entering a vital industry.

Sara Fuentes, vice president for the well-regarded trade association Transportation Institute, delivered keynote remarks Feb. 10 in the nation's capital, as part of a three-day Women on the Water Conference that began Feb 8. The event was hosted by the Consortium of State Maritime Academies with support from the U.S. Maritime Administration, the Great Lakes Maritime Academy and Northwestern Michigan College. It took place in suburban Baltimore and in Washington, D.C.

Several SIU officials attended the conference, including Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski, Assistant Vice President Michael Russo, Port Agent Mario Torrey, and Political and Legislative Director Brian Schoeneman.

Fuentes, a self-described "maritime evangelist," explained the complexities of advocating for U.S.-flag shipping and U.S. mariners. In part because the industry is heavily regulated, it takes wide-ranging outreach – and coordination among the various sectors – to deliver effective, unified messages.

"Everything is maritime policy," she stated. "The merchant marine touches almost every policy area. Every year, there are new challenges and new opportunities.... I've never been bored."

She spotlighted several challenges from the past couple of years that the industry collectively tackled, including ones involving cargo preference, the U.S. Tanker Security Program, attacks on U.S.-flag ships in the Red Sea, personnel shortages, trade issues and more.

"We have to track more than 25 different federal agencies and 12 different Congressional committees," Fuentes noted.

Pivoting to the enticing job opportunities in numerous maritime sectors, she said, "The wonderful thing about your chosen career path is that thanks to the breadth of this industry, you can follow your passions and find the right place for you.... There are so many facets to what we do, and you can do it at sea or ashore – maritime touches everything in our lives."

Fuentes then described the typically strong cooperation between labor, management, and government when it comes to promoting maritime – specifically, in this case, how representatives from every sector pulled together during the COVID pandemic.

"This is generally true for our industry," she added. "Before we talk to Congress, we build consensus together."

She wrapped up her remarks by sharing a few stories "where the sheer heroism of mariners made me feel humbled to be associated with this industry." Those accounts involved the U.S. Merchant Marine of World War II; the evacuation of Manhattan on September 11, 2001; and mariners working throughout the pandemic.

"These efforts may have been unrecognized in their time, and it took effort and teamwork to bring these stories to light," Fuentes said. "But these stories, and these people, are what keeps us going.... One thing that this industry has demonstrated time and time again is that mariners will be there to answer the call.... This is an industry for people who want to put their heads down and be respected for the work that they do. And in a world of billionaires looking for more money or influencers looking for more attention – mariners are a beacon of what true heroes can look like."



SIU Exec. VP Augie Tellez (left) meets with maritime stalwart Elaine Chao (former Secretary of Transportation and Secretary of Labor) at the event.



Keynote speaker Sara Fuentes, Transportation Institute Vice President



SIU officials Asst. VP Michael Russo (standing) and Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski (directly to his left) offer practical advice to the next generation of mariners.

# SIU President Exposes FOC System



SIU President David Heindel

*Editor's note: SIU President David Heindel also serves as Chair of the International Transport Workers' Federation's Seafarers' Section. In the latter role, he recently wrote the following article, which was circulated online, including on the popular site Splash247.*

Recent reporting on false flags and the rise of shadow fleets has rightly raised alarms about maritime security, sanctions enforcement, environmental safety – and, too often as a secondary concern, seafarers' rights. But much of the analysis still stops short of naming the enabling root cause.

In reality, these developments are the predictable outcome of what the ITF named as the flag of convenience (FOC) system more than 75 years ago – a business model deliberately designed to obscure ownership, fragment jurisdiction, and weaken enforcement with direct and devastating consequences for seafarers, for maritime security, and for the rule of law at sea.

Much of the current coverage describes the symptoms but avoids the diagnosis. False flags – the practice of flying fake flags disowned by the given registry – are not mere anomalies. They are, fundamentally, a natural outcome of the FOC system.

Under the FOC model, shipowners can register vessels in states with no meaningful genuine link to ownership, management, or operation – in direct contravention of international law under the UN

Convention on the Law of the Sea. In exchange for registration fees, those flag states offer minimal scrutiny and weak enforcement, effectively selling enforcement-free sovereignty.

As Mark Dickinson, general secretary of UK maritime union, Nautilus, explained to the BBC, when it comes to spiraling seafarer abandonment, including on shadow fleet ships, FOC states have demonstrated “a complete derogation of responsibility towards their fleets and the crews who sail on them.” He then rightly outlined the demand, in line with international law, for there to always be “a genuine link between shipowners and the flags under which they sail.”

The jurisdictional ambiguity that allows ships to shift identities, manipulate registries, or operate without effective oversight is not accidental. It is built into the business model.

This is why false flags and shadow fleets have continued to proliferate despite increased sanctions, surveillance, and massively increased media and political attention. Industry profits from opacity. Flag states – in the case of the worst offenders, with flags often outsourced to unscrupulous overseas business interests – profit from regulatory leniency. Together, they create exactly the conditions in which fraudulent registries, identity switching, and impunity thrive.

And the same governance failures driving false flags also produce severe human consequences.

Last month, the International Transport Workers' Federation released new data showing that 2025 was the worst year on record for seafarer abandonment. More than 6,200 seafarers were abandoned across 410 ships, a 32% increase on the previous year and the sixth consecutive year of rising cases.

When ownership is hidden and flag state responsibility is diluted, seafarers are left exposed to a perfect storm of profit-driven abuse. Abandonment, unpaid wages, unsafe vessels, denial of shore leave, and the absence of legal protection are not incidental

outcomes. They are direct consequences of a system designed to enable the evasion of responsibility.

The same dynamics were laid bare during the global crew change crisis, when hundreds of thousands of seafarers were trapped on board for months beyond their contracts. Once again, fragmented jurisdiction and weak flag-state responsibility allowed governments and shipowners to deflect accountability, leaving workers stranded....

The risks extend well beyond labor. The FOC system undermines maritime security, environmental protection, and the rule of law itself – risks that policymakers can no longer afford to treat as peripheral or theoretical.

If governments are serious about tackling false flags and shadow fleets, they must move beyond reactive enforcement and confront the structure that enables abuse – and government investigations into FOCs, as currently underway in the U.S., are a necessary and welcome first step.

Ultimately, this means enforcing the long-ignored principle of a genuine link between a vessel's flag and its beneficial owners, operators, and managers. It means mandatory beneficial ownership transparency as a condition of registration and operation. It means holding flag states accountable when they repeatedly fail to meet their legal responsibilities.

False flags, shadow fleets, and abandonment are not separate problems. They are interconnected outcomes of a failing system abandoned by decades of government inaction.

History provides a clear warning: When countries retreat from national flags and cabotage, enforcement fractures as opacity becomes the norm. And the shadows become used to hide all manner of illegality and criminality, not least abuses of seafarers' rights....

We must rebuild and defend national-flag shipping and cabotage laws to bring all maritime trade back into the open, where there is no hiding place for shadow fleets, and no means to side-step accountability, national security, safety, and fair competition.

Until we do this, these crises will continue to repeat, under different names, in different contexts, but for the same reasons.

## Article Underscores How Jones Act Benefits Puerto Rico

A recent online op-ed by a popular political commentator and columnist helped set the record straight regarding the Jones Act's impact on Puerto Rico.

In late February, Julio Rivera posted an article noting in part the speculation (within maritime circles) that the Super Bowl halftime show might include a reference to America's freight cabotage law.

“It never happened,” Rivera pointed out. “What remained instead in the aftermath were the issues that actually shape daily life on the island: fragile infrastructure, an aging power grid, and the long-running struggles of the Puerto Rico Electric Power Authority. Those topics may not trend as easily on social media, but they sit much closer to Puerto Rico's economic reality than any shipping statute.”

Rivera stated that the Jones Act can be “an easy villain” for its critics, but that their ire is misdirected.

“Puerto Rico's economic challenges are not the result of a single law,” he wrote. “They are the result of structural weaknesses layered over time, and pretending otherwise might be politically useful but it is economically shallow.”

He further asserted that the time-tested law “supports a domestic maritime industry that both Puerto Rico and the mainland United States can rely on for national security, disaster response, and supply chain stability. For an island that depends on ships for essentials like food and fuel, having a dependable domestic shipping network is not some abstract benefit. It is practical insurance. When hurricanes hit or global logistics snarl, reliability matters more than theory.”

“Serious economic analysis backs up the idea that the Jones Act is not the price driver some claim,” he continued. “A comprehensive study ... found that the law's impact on Puerto Rico's consumer prices is modest compared to bigger forces like energy costs, infrastructure inefficiencies, and public-sector debt burdens. Repeal advocates often imply that removing the law would dramatically lower prices. That is a comforting narrative, but it glosses over how global shipping markets actually work. Foreign vessels do not operate at a discount out of goodwill, and international freight rates are volatile by nature.”

Rivera said that the territory's biggest challenges center on “infrastructure and governance.” The territory's shaky electrical grid, for instance, can be “a deal breaker” for various investments there.

“None of this is an attack on Puerto Rico,” Rivera clarified. “It is a recognition that the island competes globally for capital. Many places advertise stable infrastructure, regulatory clarity, and institutional transparency. Puerto Rico has enormous strengths, from its workforce to its strategic location, but unlocking its full potential requires focusing on these fundamentals.”

“Blaming the Jones Act for problems rooted in infrastructure and governance risks letting the real issues off the hook,” he added. “It is easier to point outward than to do the slower, harder work of reform. But reform is what attracts durable investment and long-term job creation.”

Rivera further pointed out that some critics who insist the Jones Act is at the heart of Puerto Rico's difficulties “oversimplify a complex system. Maritime analyst Sal Mercogliano and others who study shipping closely have repeatedly explained that vessel supply, fuel prices, port efficiency, insurance, and global trade dynamics all shape costs. Those realities do not disappear if one law changes.”

“As an American of Puerto Rican descent, I want the island to succeed economically, not just culturally,” Rivera said. “That means being honest about what holds it back and clear-eyed about what actually helps. The Jones Act is not a cure-all, but it provides structure and reliability within the broader U.S. economic and security framework.”

He concluded, “Puerto Rico's prosperity will ultimately be built on reliable infrastructure, clean governance, and investor confidence. Fixing the grid, modernizing systems, and strengthening institutional trust will do more to raise living standards than chasing a shipping-law scapegoat.”

Cheap shots at the Jones Act can trend for a day. Stable power and trustworthy institutions generate growth for decades.... The island's people are resilient, creative, and entrepreneurial. With dependable infrastructure and accountable governance, they can create a stable foundation and real economic growth for generations to come.”

**“As an American of Puerto Rican descent, I want the island to succeed economically, not just culturally. That means being honest about what holds it back and clear-eyed about what actually helps. The Jones Act is not a cure-all, but it provides structure and reliability within the broader U.S. economic and security framework...”**

**Cheap shots at the Jones Act can trend for a day. Stable power and trustworthy institutions generate growth for decades.”**

**JULIO RIVERA**  
Political Commentator

# At Sea & Ashore with the SIU



**PROMOTING MARITIME** – SIU Patrolman Kirk Pegan (right) meets with Alex Mealer, who's running for Congress (Texas' 9th District). Photo was taken in Dayton, Texas. Pegan used the occasion to emphasize the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine.



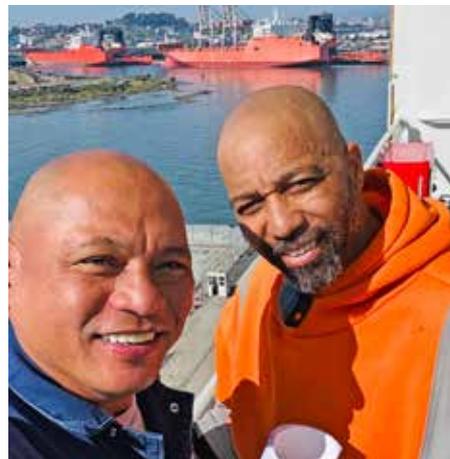
**BOOKS RECEIVED IN ALGONAC** – AB Mohamed Alahmadi (left in photo above, left) receives his A-seniority book, while GUDE Sameh Suwaileh (left in remaining photo) obtains his B book. Both Seafarers are pictured at the hiring hall with Safety Director Jason Brown.



**MILESTONE IN JERSEY** – AB Arnold Baluyot (left) receives his A-seniority book. He's pictured at the Jersey City hall with SIU Asst. VP Ray Henderson.



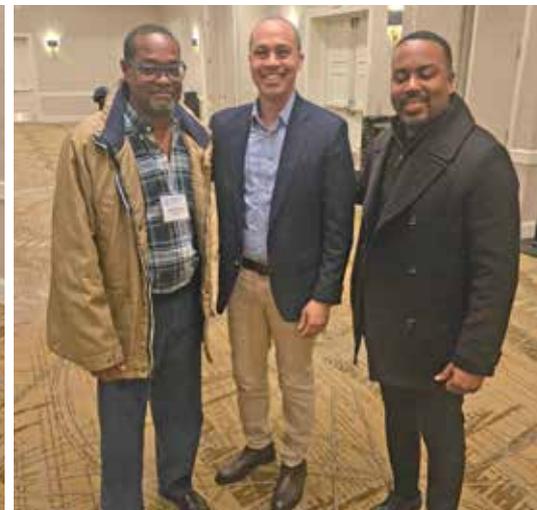
**SINCERE THANKS** – SIU Exec. VP Augie Tellez (left) and American Maritime Officers President Willie Barrere (right) express gratitude to U.S. Rep. John Garamendi (D-California) for his unwavering support of the U.S. Merchant Marine. Event took place Feb. 10 in the nation's capital.



**ABOARD CAPE STARR** – This Seafaring Selfie includes (from left) Recertified Bosuns Ritche Acuman and Antjuan Webb Sr. In the background are the *Cape San Juan* and *Cape Sable*. All three vessels are operated by TOTE.



**SUPPORTING WORKERS' RIGHTS** – SIU VP Sam Spain and Port Agent Mario Torrey took part in the Virginia AFL-CIO 39th Legislative Conference Feb. 1-2 in Richmond. Pictured from left in the three-person photo are Spain, Virginia Attorney General Jay Jones, and Torrey. The other photo includes Spain and Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi.



**ABOARD GREEN DELTA** – ABM Rolando Dinong is pictured aboard the Waterman vessel in the Pacific Northwest.

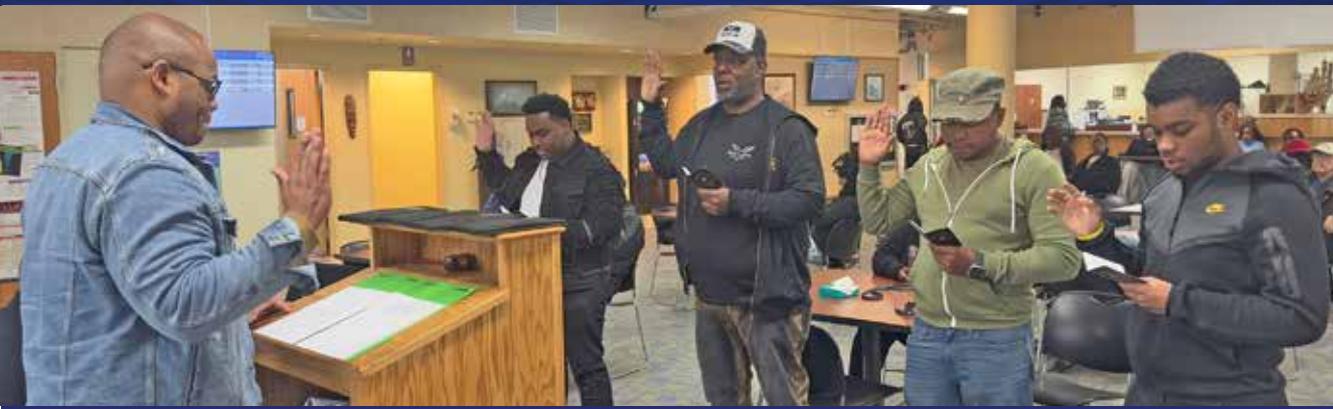


**ABOARD DANIEL INOUE** – Providing service with a smile aboard the Matson vessel in Honolulu are (from left) ACU Romeo Molina, Chief Steward Ronald Williams, and Chief Cook Monell Liburd.



**CAPE INTREPID COMPLETES SERVICE** – The Ocean Duchess-operated ship recently was turned over to the National Defense Reserve Fleet. These photos were taken from mid- to late January; they include snapshots from an MLK Day cookout. The five-person photo includes two inspectors from the Beaumont Reserve Fleet, along with (from left) Oiler Carmus Peet, Chief Engineer Thomas Gay, and (second from right) Recertified Bosun LBJ Tanoa. Removing the ship's bell in the three-person pic are (from left) Electrician Phillip Greenwell, Oiler Carmus Peet, and Third Mate Edward Max Stovall. Chief Steward Delbra Singleton-Leslie is in the individual photo, and the remaining photo was taken at a farewell dinner. From left are Chief Mate Nasir Bousselob, Electrician Phillip Greenwell, Chief Engineer Chris Davis, and Recertified Bosun LBJ Tanoa.

# At Sea & Ashore with the SIU



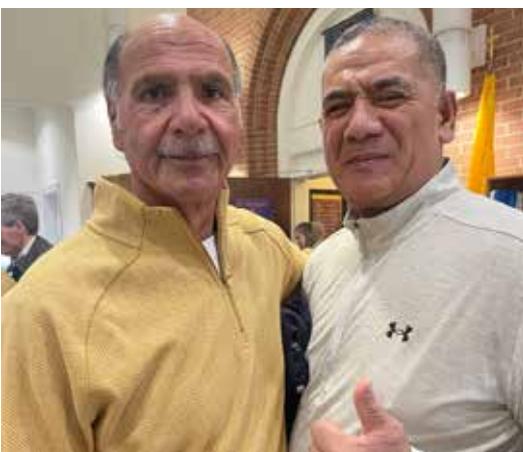
**BOOKS GALORE IN JACKSONVILLE** – Taking the oath (larger group photo) at the hiring hall are Seafarers Erris Jackson, Charles Williams, Ismael Andriamasy, and Eric Butler. SIU Port Agent Ashley Nelson is at left. Williams received his A-seniority book, while the others obtained their respective B books. In the remaining pic, SA Valencia Byrd (left) receives her B book. She's pictured with SIU Patrolman Eddie Pittman.



**ABOARD EVERGREEN STATE** – Pictured from left aboard the Intrepid vessel are Pumpman Gilbert Johnson, Recertified Bosun John Cedeno, SIU Patrolman Kirk Pegan, and AB Carlos Avila.



**ABOARD USNS JOHN GLENN** – Pictured from left aboard the Ocean Ships vessel on the West Coast are QEE Rahsaan Alexander, AB Joshua Lux, Steward/Baker Linda McPhetridge, QMED Wilbert Hinton, OS Jon Oliver, Bosun Teena Werner, Safety Director John Sunga, and Storekeeper Felix Rosado.



**AS SEEN IN SOUTHERN MARYLAND** – Recertified Bosun LBJ Tanoa shared these photos from his recent stay in Piney Point. The group photo includes classmates from a Tanker Assist DL course (from left): Christopher Moore, Ricky Desir, Kia Major, Jarrell Dorsey, LBJ Tanoa, and Joaquim Ganeto. In the other photo, the bosun catches up with retired SIU/Paul Hall Center official Bart Rogers at St. George Catholic Church in Valley Lee.



**BRAINSTORMING IN FLORIDA** – Pictured at a Keystone Crews Conference in the sunshine state are (from left) SIU Asst. VP Kris Hopkins, Chief Mate Connor Shea, Keystone VP of Operations Dave Carroll, and Second Mate Jimmy Hargrove.



**ABOARD LIBERTY PRIDE** – Pictured from left in the three-person snapshot aboard the Liberty Maritime ship in the Pacific Northwest are ABB Andre Nero, Recertified Bosun Manolo Delos Santos, and ABM Ping San Pedro. In the remaining non-ship photo are (from left) Chief Cook Kevin Robinson and Steward/Baker Jessica Davis.

# At Sea & Ashore with the SIU



**ABOARD LOUISIANA** – Gathered on the Fairwater tanker in Long Beach, California, are (from left) SA Hussein Moosa, Chief Cook Yolanda Martinez, Steward/Baker Michael Todman, Recertified Bosun Albert Mensah, and SIU Patrolman Gordon Godel.



**WELCOME GUESTS** – SIU and International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) personnel in late February welcomed a group from the North American Maritime Ministry Association to the Houston hiring hall. Port Agent J.B. Niday (front, third from right) and ITF Inspector Shwe Aung (front, second from right) met with them and conducted a Q&A. Dr. Jason Zuidema, executive director of the ministry group, is standing second from right.



**APPRECIATION IN D.C.** – During a gathering earlier this year in the nation's capital, SIU Asst. VP Michael Russo (left) thanks U.S. Sen. John Cornyn (R-Texas) for his support of the U.S. Merchant Marine.



**WITH SEAFARERS IN VIRGINIA** – Storekeeper Ruel Torres (left in photo above, right, with SIU Port Agent Josh Rawls) receives his A-seniority book, while GVA Rashona McGilberry (left in other photo, with SIU Patrolwoman Kianta Lee) obtains her full book. Both snapshots were taken at the hall in Norfolk.



**WELCOME ASHORE IN NORFOLK** – Bosun Robert White (left), pictured at the hiring hall with SIU Port Agent Josh Rawls, picks up his first pension check. White sailed with the SIU for nearly 30 years.



**WELCOME ASHORE (x2) IN PHILLY** – Picking up their respective first pension checks at the hiring hall are Chief Steward Kenneth Kelly (left in photo above, left, with SIU Port Agent Joe Baselice) and Thommie Hampton (right in remaining photo, with Safety Director Andre MacCray). Kelly sailed with the union for 35 years. Hampton worked in various capacities with the SIU for nearly 40 years, including lots of time on shore gangs.



**WITH SEAFARERS IN PUERTO RICO** – OMU Walter Figueroa (wearing yellow shirt) and OS Yanot Sanchez Cumba (left in remaining photo) receive their respective full books. Both Seafarers are pictured at the hiring hall in San Juan with Safety Director Ricky Rivera.



**TALKING MARITIME IN TEXAS** – SIU Asst. VP Joe Zavala (left) and Port Agent J.B. Niday (right) chat with U.S. Deputy Maritime Administrator Sang Yi at a recent industry event in Houston.



**FULL BOOK IN PINEY** – Chief Steward Yunlay Bridges (right) receives his book in Piney Point, Maryland. At left is SIU Port Agent Kelly Krick.



**ABOARD SBX** – SIU VP Hazel Galbiso (sixth from right) and Safety Director Amber Akana (far left) meet with SIU crew members aboard the TOTE vessel in Honolulu.

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# In Their Own Words: Seafarers Rising Through the Ranks

## Randy Diaz

*Editor's note: This article is the second in an occasional series featuring former SIU members who have risen through the ranks (or, in informal maritime industry terms, have gone up through the hawsepipe). Randy Diaz graduated from the Paul Hall Center's apprentice program in 1998; he currently sails as the captain of the USNS Bowditch (Ocean Ships, Inc.). He turns 52 this month, and had just disembarked when the interview took place.*

### How and why did you enter the maritime industry?

I had heard of the merchant marine through a movie, "With Honors," around 1996. Joe Pesci's character advises against sailing in the engine room. Later, I was working in a meat department, and the butchers knew about the U.S. Merchant Marine. They connected me to the SIU. I'm from Queens, New York; I went to the Brooklyn hall and met Robert Selzer, and later on dealt with Jack Sheehan (Selzer and Sheehan were longtime union officials).

It sounded interesting and I thought, let me try it out. I'm glad I did. At that time, I was looking for a change. Before that, I had been playing music in New York.

### What do you remember about the early part of your career?

From the start, I already knew I eventually wanted a license. I also knew I didn't want to go into the steward department. The kitchen is okay but it wasn't for me. When I got on a ship, it solidified that deck was the right choice. I went up to the bridge at night (aboard the *Sea Lion*), and the mood reminded me of a New York nightclub.

I also knew I didn't want to go through a four-year maritime academy. Ironically, I didn't even know there was one in New York until I went to Piney Point (where the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center is located).

I sailed for eight-and-a-half years with the SIU, got my A-seniority book.

### What was it like when you got your first license?

The SIU helped me get into the AMO school in Toledo, Ohio - Jack Sheehan had the knowledge about the process. (The American Maritime Officers are affiliated with the Seafarers International Union of North America.) I got my license in August 2007 and got my first job (as an officer) in November of that year. The last tanker I sailed as an AB was my first ship as a third mate, the *M/V Charleston*.

I was very fortunate going through the hawsepipe. I wouldn't trade that experience for anything, and

I wasn't going to get an education like that at an academy.

### How difficult was it to earn a license?

First, I tried to learn on the job, pay attention to what was happening around me. All the testing and the paperwork is just going to get you in the door - it doesn't mean you're going to be a great mate.

I established a routine and was studying every module, every single day. At the school in Toledo, the people who took it seriously wound up doing well.

### What's something you wish more people knew about the maritime industry?

Half the time, when you talk about our industry, right away people are thinking about the Navy. But they don't consider, how do we get imported cars? How do we get these sacks of rice from other countries, or food products that aren't produced in the U.S.? People think it all comes by plane, maybe.

So, it'd be great if more people knew about us, period, although I do think there's some increased knowledge thanks to the internet.

### On that topic, how important is shipboard internet connectivity, and how reliable is it, generally?

It's good that you asked about that. The reliability depends on where you work.... It's very important to have access to the internet to at least do banking and things of that nature, and to stay in touch with loved ones.

### Have you experienced any unexpected benefits from this career?

I'm fortunate and I really appreciate the blessings I've had. Back around the year 2000, I got my AB ticket and got my first AB job on the *Petersburg*, in Guam. On that particular tour, my last month, we were going to Japan to offload, and ultimately stopped at a Singapore shipyard. They let us go, and that's when I discovered Thailand. There was something about this place; I wanted to go again.

I went back that same year and got on the *LNG Leo* after that as an AB. A fellow AB gave me a book about the history of Thailand, and that's when I realized why it intrigued me: It was never colonized.

But Thailand (his current residence) is an example of why I've stuck with this job. It gave me so many freedoms. People may think if you're on a ship it's like prison, but I feel free when I'm working. You can really analyze things, and you also do a lot of growing up on a ship. I never looked at it like, 'I can't wait to



Aboard the USNS Bowditch in 2017

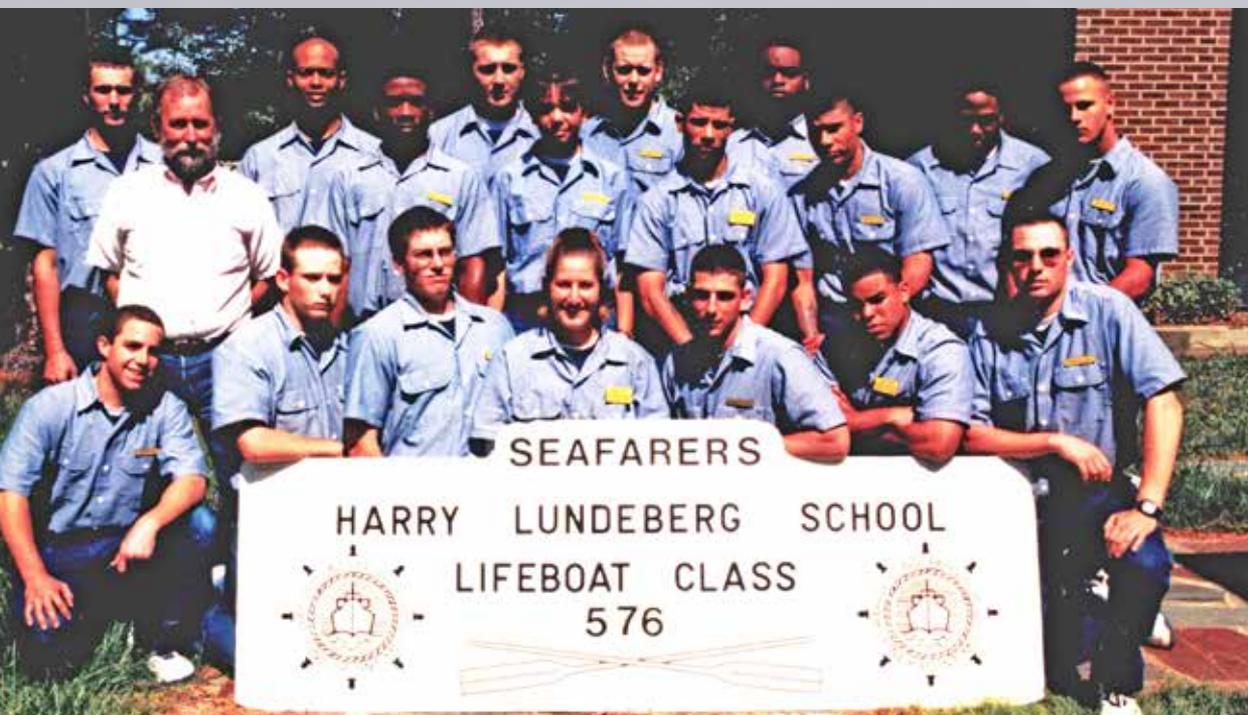
get off of here.' I couldn't really stay in Thailand if it wasn't for this job. My wife understands this as well.

### Speaking of family, it seems as if one of the most commonly voiced concerns for people thinking about a maritime career is the time away from home. How have you made it work?

My wife knows we couldn't live how we're living if it wasn't for this career. But the effects of being physically separated depends on the person you're in the relationship with. It really does. How much are you invested in that relationship? For me, I'm fortunate I'm able to talk with my wife every day, and she's happy with that.

### What's something you would change about the industry?

More than anything, the regulations have gotten out of control. You're restricted on man-hours after STCW (implementation of the International Convention on Standards of Training, Certification and Watchkeeping). Granted, it takes just one accident to change things (adding or modifying regulations), but I remember stories from bosuns and ABs who were working six and seven hours of overtime a day. You



With his lifeboat classmates in 1998 (front, second from right)



Capt. Randy Diaz

# In Their Own Words: Seafarers Rising Through the Ranks

kept on working and made more money. This and a few other industry restrictions that have been introduced, have taken away that opportunity.

## What's one of the biggest differences between sailing as an officer versus sailing in an unlicensed position?

I say this all the time. The good thing is, when you're sailing unlicensed, when you're done with your watch or what have you, nobody's going to bother you. When you're an officer, you're one of one. You might have to get woken up at a certain time because you have to change the voyage plan, for example.

## What is something noteworthy about serving as a captain?

You start to see the management abilities of people around you, how you expect people to be treated. My thing is always, do the right thing. Consider what the other person is thinking. That's how I apply my management. This is what I learned: You can't expect the ship to adapt to you. You have to adapt to the ship. You can do whatever is in your power, but we don't have a magic wand to change the internet or the food, for example. You have to recognize what you do and do not control, and that includes when you're in stressful situations. Only worry about things I can control.

## Have you had any particularly memorable voyages?

I haven't been in any type of rescue, which is a good thing. I always say, boring is good. But I remember I took a relief job as an AB and I remember starting in New Jersey. We went to Florida, then Texas. Went through the Panama Canal, then San Francisco, up to Anacortes and Cherry Point. Then back to Texas and Florida. Throw the Mississippi River in there, too. That was the first time I actually did the East Coast, Gulf Coast and West Coast all in one trip. It took 99 days, on the *Overseas Philadelphia*, around 2004.

Another one comes to mind. I think I was a music snob – I played music before I went into the merchant marine. Anyway, I was standing watch with a second mate; I was an AB. He had two CDs from these country singers, and I said, 'You're listening to country?!' Just giving him some [teasing]. He said if everybody liked the same music, this would be a boring world. I said, 'You're right, and I apologize.' How shallow my



Diaz is at far left in this 1999 snapshot (government vessels class).

thought process was. Since then, that's how I've lived: Everybody has a right to like what they want. I never want to criticize anyone's interests again.

## What are your overall thoughts about the SIU?

I'm appreciative of them, obviously. The SIU gave me all the help I could have asked for. You always heard (the late SIU President) Mike Sacco say upgrade, upgrade, upgrade! That was the slogan, so, I upgraded. I took it seriously. I know Mike isn't with us any longer, but I do want to thank him for his guidance and encouragement.

## What advice would you give to someone who's considering entering the industry, or to someone who only recently started sailing?

Are you ready to take a plunge into something different? Maybe they know somebody in the industry but it's not the same until you experience it. Are you okay being away from home? Is home where you make it? This job gives you so much flexibility with where you want to make your home. Knowing what this job can give you might be the motivation you need to stay.

You're going to realize that things don't really change when you go back home after three or four months. I say embrace it. And if you try and it doesn't

work out, there's no harm in saying it might not be for me. That doesn't mean you were defeated.

Find out if you can hack this, because the job can give you a lot of options. I knew I wasn't going to be happy, for example, going from high school to college and getting into a shoreside career. Besides, how else am I going to experience the world and other cultures? In a regular shoreside job, you maybe have a week or two for vacation every year. In maritime, you're off for long stretches.

## Finally, what are some advantages of sailing as a union member?

You don't feel tied down. If you're on a ship and it's not working out for you, you have freedom to choose. You also have representation. If you're not happy with something, you can talk to the union. If you work for a company without a union, they literally can say take it or leave it. With a union, you can always go to a different vessel and stay employed.

Also, the union benefits are really good. I know the SIU benefits were good when I was a member, and they've improved since then.

I am very grateful for the SIU. If it wasn't for the SIU, I wouldn't be in the position I'm in now. I wouldn't be here if I hadn't been there.



With fellow mariners in a shipyard in 2021



On the bridge in 2023



With shipmates and military personnel during a 2025 reception on the *Bowditch*

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# Inquiring Seafarer

This month's question was answered by an assortment of personnel at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. At the time they were interviewed (early January), two individuals were in the apprentice program, one was working as an instructor, and the others already were active SIU members.

## Question: What do you like most about being an SIU member (or apprentice or instructor)?



**Kimberly Wilson**  
Apprentice

I love the teamwork. Working in the kitchen is so exciting. The people in the department as well as the staff have been really helpful. I look forward to being out on the ocean and caring for the people on my ship.



**Lawrence Wright**  
Chief Steward

I like everything, especially the vacations, and my home port in Jacksonville. I enjoy meeting SIU members from all around.



**Justin Landreneau**  
Apprentice

I love working here in the galley. I've been here about three months now and I'm a UA training to be an SA and, hopefully in the near future, a chief cook.



**Joe Marino**  
QMED

I've been sailing for 13 years and the SIU gave me the ability to be a rockstar and helped me become "Hot Rod Joe." I restore classic cars, collect cars, vintage cars and motorcycles. I also make metal art sculptures with welding.



**Michael Papaioannou**  
Electrician

I've spent 25 years in the SIU and am close to retiring, but I truly enjoy being a sailor. I enjoy having four months on and four months off, and I also like encouraging the young people I sail with to pursue further education so they can improve their skills and achieve higher rankings.



**Pat Schoenberger**  
Deck Instructor

I enjoy most things about this job, but I most enjoy being able to train my students and give them the skillset to earn a great living. I was trained in a facility and given the skillset, and I had a lot of respect for the instructors that spent time and effort with me when I was going for my education. Being able to do the same for folks that are interested in the maritime world is pretty awesome.

## Pic from the Past



The original caption from the July 1974 LOG: "Discussing cable loading operations are, from left: John Whiting, cable AB; Mr. Siman, who is an AT&T cable operator director, and Bosun Herb Libby." Photo was taken aboard the *Long Lines*, which had a crew complement of 90.

# Notice

## Important Reminders About Prescription Drug Coverage for Pensioners

If you are eligible for medical benefits from the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan when you retire, you will also be eligible for prescription coverage. If you are 65 or older, the Plan provides this coverage through a Medicare Part D prescription drug program administered by Retiree RxCare. However, the Plan does not provide prescription drug benefits to a pensioner's spouse or dependents.

**You do not have to pay a premium for your prescription coverage if you are over 65.** The Plan's prescription coverage is comparable to the standard Medicare prescription drug coverage and is considered Creditable Coverage. **If you enroll in another Medicare Part D prescription drug program, you will lose your prescription coverage from SHBP, and you will not be permitted to re-enroll in the future.** Due to Medicare rules, **you will also lose your prescription coverage if you enroll in a Medicare Advantage plan that offers prescription coverage.**

If you decide to purchase a separate plan to supplement the Plan's vision, dental or hearing coverage, **make sure it is an ancillary plan** that only provides those benefits, and **not** a Medicare Advantage Plan.

For more information, contact:

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Fax: (301) 994-0116  
Email: [claimsdept@seafarers.org](mailto:claimsdept@seafarers.org)



## April & May Membership Meetings

Piney Point	Monday: April 6, May 4
Algonac	Thursday: April 16, May 14
Baltimore	Thursday: April 9, May 7
Guam	Thursday: April 23, May 21
Honolulu	Friday: April 17, May 15
Houston	Monday: April 13, May 11
Jacksonville	Thursday: April 9, May 7
Joliet	Thursday: April 16, May 14
Mobile	Wednesday: April 15, May 13
New Orleans	Tuesday: April 14, May 12
Jersey City	Tuesday: April 7, May 5
Norfolk	Friday: April 10, May 8
Oakland	Thursday: April 16, May 14
Philadelphia	Wednesday: April 8, May 6
Port Everglades	Thursday: April 16, May 14
San Juan	Thursday: April 9, May 7
St. Louis	Friday: April 17, May 15
Tacoma	Friday: April 24, May 22
Wilmington	Monday: April 20, May 18

Each port's meeting starts at 10:30 a.m.

# Dispatchers' Report for Deep Sea

"Total Registered" and "Total Shipped" data is cumulative from February 10, 2026 - March 11, 2026.  
"Registered on the Beach" data is as of March 12, 2026.

Port	Total Registered All Groups			Total Shipped All Groups			Trip Reliefs	Registered on Beach All Groups		
	A	B	C	A	B	C		A	B	C
<b>Deck Department</b>										
Algonac	23	11	0	9	3	0	3	48	14	1
Anchorage	6	0	0	2	1	0	1	4	1	2
Baltimore	2	2	0	1	3	1	2	2	2	1
Fort Lauderdale	21	13	4	14	13	3	13	28	19	10
Guam	4	2	1	1	0	0	0	4	4	1
Harvey	7	3	4	6	1	1	3	12	10	4
Honolulu	2	2	1	2	0	0	0	4	5	2
Houston	26	17	11	29	7	2	13	44	32	21
Jacksonville	22	34	11	25	25	6	14	38	46	14
Jersey City	18	6	0	10	8	1	9	30	9	3
Joliet	3	2	3	1	0	1	1	4	5	3
Mobile	12	9	3	8	4	2	4	11	7	8
Norfolk	21	11	6	19	15	10	19	35	20	4
Oakland	6	4	0	2	3	0	0	15	4	1
Philadelphia	3	0	2	2	0	0	1	5	2	2
Piney Point	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	0
Puerto Rico	8	8	3	6	8	1	7	5	6	1
St. Louis	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	1	0	0
Tacoma	21	3	0	17	4	1	6	32	8	3
Wilmington	30	12	3	17	6	1	7	48	21	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>236</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>372</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>86</b>
<b>Engine Department</b>										
Algonac	1	2	0	3	2	0	2	9	4	0
Anchorage	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0	0
Baltimore	3	3	0	1	4	0	1	3	1	1
Fort Lauderdale	10	6	0	8	4	0	6	10	13	0
Guam	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	1
Harvey	5	2	0	4	0	1	0	2	4	1
Honolulu	6	2	0	5	1	2	0	8	3	1
Houston	2	5	5	9	1	4	4	9	16	6
Jacksonville	25	21	4	12	18	2	8	35	24	6
Jersey City	9	4	2	7	3	1	4	13	7	2
Joliet	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	4	1	0
Mobile	3	2	0	1	0	1	1	8	2	0
Norfolk	15	12	5	12	12	3	10	16	13	3
Oakland	5	2	3	2	0	0	1	5	3	2
Philadelphia	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	6	0	0
Piney Point	3	3	1	0	1	1	1	4	2	1
Puerto Rico	4	1	0	3	1	0	0	5	2	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tacoma	6	1	0	10	1	1	1	12	3	0
Wilmington	9	2	3	8	3	2	2	20	9	4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>173</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Steward Department</b>										
Algonac	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	8	0	0
Anchorage	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	0
Baltimore	2	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Fort Lauderdale	6	4	1	4	2	1	4	10	5	2
Guam	1	2	0	0	1	0	0	1	3	0
Harvey	2	2	0	3	0	0	1	3	6	0
Honolulu	3	1	1	3	1	0	1	11	0	2
Houston	12	7	2	9	3	1	4	26	15	2
Jacksonville	12	15	2	13	19	2	11	27	29	5
Jersey City	4	6	2	2	3	0	1	13	4	2
Joliet	1	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	0	0
Mobile	3	3	0	1	2	0	1	5	1	0
Norfolk	12	11	2	9	11	2	3	20	12	6
Oakland	12	3	0	7	4	0	4	20	2	2
Philadelphia	4	2	1	2	3	0	3	3	0	1
Piney Point	6	2	0	0	4	0	2	7	2	1
Puerto Rico	4	6	3	4	6	2	4	5	8	1
St. Louis	1	2	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	0
Tacoma	7	2	0	4	3	0	3	9	4	0
Wilmington	15	3	3	15	5	1	9	38	4	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Entry Department</b>										
Algonac	2	3	12	0	1	2	0	2	10	22
Anchorage	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Baltimore	0	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	6	1
Fort Lauderdale	0	5	11	0	4	5	1	0	10	16
Guam	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Harvey	0	2	5	0	0	1	0	0	4	13
Honolulu	0	1	6	0	2	2	0	0	0	7
Houston	0	14	8	4	13	3	6	6	24	16
Jacksonville	2	22	28	0	22	17	7	2	40	58
Jersey City	0	12	11	0	7	6	2	0	20	22
Joliet	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	0	3
Mobile	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Norfolk	1	12	26	0	10	12	2	1	16	55
Oakland	0	3	4	0	4	5	1	0	9	8
Philadelphia	0	1	4	0	0	3	0	0	1	4
Piney Point	0	1	2	0	1	1	1	0	0	1
Puerto Rico	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Tacoma	1	3	1	0	0	0	0	2	10	6
Wilmington	0	11	21	0	8	16	2	1	15	29
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>266</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>460</b>	<b>382</b>	<b>240</b>	<b>346</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>222</b>	<b>768</b>	<b>594</b>	<b>409</b>

# Digest of Shipboard Union Meetings

The Seafarers LOG attempts to print as many digests of union shipboard minutes as possible. On occasion, because of space limitations, some will be omitted. Ships' minutes first are reviewed by the union's contract department. Those issues requiring attention or resolution are addressed by the union upon receipt of the ships' minutes. The minutes are then forwarded to the Seafarers LOG for publication.

**LIBERTY PEACE** (Liberty Maritime Corp.), November 23 – Chairman **Mohamed Alahmadi**, Secretary **Pauline Crespo Guillen**, Steward Delegate **Annie Walker**. Educational director reminded crew to check the *Seafarers LOG* for upgrading courses offered at the Paul Hall Center. Course dates also are posted on the SIU website. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like increases in both wages and dental coverage. Dinner plates and electrical transformers ordered. Cookies and table dressings re-filled. Next port: Jacksonville, Florida.

**WASHINGTON** (Fairwater Crew Management, LLC), December 20 – Chairman **Jerome Lockett**, Secretary **Erik Ivey**, Educational Director **Alex Canada**, Deck Delegate **Carlo Gentile**, Engine Delegate **Brandon Fore**, Steward Delegate **Mario Botelho**. Chairman thanked steward department for a good Thanksgiving Day dinner. He reminded everyone to keep noise down for off-watch crew members and to clean rooms well for oncoming crew. Educational director encouraged members to keep up with credentials and to renew documents six months in advance. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Ship needs new mattresses. Members requested 18 for 30 vacation, increases in shoe reimbursement and extra meal pay to steward department for extra crew members. Crew discussed importance of rank-and-file involvement in contract negotiations.

Next port: Anacortes, Washington.

**EVERGLADES TRADER** (U.S. Marine Management, LLC), December 24 – Chairman **Leroy Sierra**, Secretary **Ammar Sailan**, Educational Director **Jonathan Bernardez Bernardez**, Deck Delegate **Ramona Tapley**, Engine Delegate **Samuel Fagerness**, Steward Delegate **Ana Mohler**. Blankets and fans needed for rooms. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members reviewed questions about pay in lieu of day off.

**MAERSK ATLANTA** (Maersk Line, Limited), January 18 – Chairman **Ferdinand Gongora**, Secretary **Glenn Williams**, Educational Director **Derek Chestnut**, Engine Delegate **Reinaldo Roman**. Chairman thanked crew for a job well done and reported a safe trip. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members would like 25 for 30 vacation.

**HUDSON EXPRESS** (Marine Personnel & Provisioning), January 18 – Chairman **Zeki Karaahmet**, Secretary **Nicholas Fortunato**, Steward Delegate **Brittany Ruffin**. Chairman reported a good voyage overall and thanked all departments. He reminded members to leave clean rooms before sign-off and also to separate burnables, plastics and food waste for trash management. No beefs or disputed OT to report. Members conducted a memorial dedicated to the *El Faro* crew. Next port: Long Beach, California.

**ALASKAN NAVIGATOR** (Alaska Tanker Company, LLC), January 25 – Chairman **Adel Ahmed**, Secretary **Albert Sison**, Educational Director **William Kilbuck**, Deck Delegate **Bonifacio Fortes**, Engine Delegate **Aljohn Fernandez**, Steward Delegate **Nasr Almusab**. Chairman advised crew to check out the National Maritime Center website's new MMC function and to renew medical certificates early. Secretary asked members to keep food out of crew's mess sink and to not store personal baggage in crew's linen locker. He also reminded everyone to remove personal belongings from staterooms when going on vacation. Educational director directed crew to union website for course dates offered at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members suggested a ship slop chest to provide access to basic toiletries, hats, shirts, etc. Crew requested 25 for 30 vacation, unlimited Wi-Fi, wage increases for SAs and QMEDs and increases in dental and eye care benefits. Next port: Long Beach, California.

**OVERSEAS LONG BEACH** (Overseas Ship Management), January 25 – Chairman **Paul Brown**, Secretary **Antajuan Beasley**, Educational Director **Christopher Edwards**, Deck Delegate **Andres Martinez**, Engine Delegate **Christopher Franklin**, Steward Delegate **Nelson Bernardez**. Chairman reminded crew of online payment

option for union dues and upcoming dues increase in January 2027. He mentioned new process of email-issued medical certificates and noted online options for MMC and passport renewal. Educational director emphasized the importance of maintaining credentials and upgrading at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. New blankets, towels and sheets needed. Members requested unlimited Wi-Fi, 20 for 30 vacation and refrigerators in each cabin. Crew would like shorter rotary rotation for tankers, better penalty pay, higher contractual raises, domestic travel reimbursement and Christmas bonuses. Next port: Lake Charles, Louisiana.

**HUDSON EXPRESS** (Marine Personnel & Provisioning), March 1 – Chairman **Zeki Karaahmet**, Secretary **Jonte Crenshaw**, Educational Director **Dennis Malaran**, Deck Delegate **Autum Pough**, Steward Delegate **Deirick Coltrane**. Chairman praised crew for job well done, while secretary encouraged shipmates to keep up the good work. Educational director advised members to upgrade at the Paul Hall Center and to come to him if they have problems with their rooms. Deck delegate urged members to clean up after themselves and to stay respectful. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Next port: Long Beach, California.

## Know Your Rights

**FINANCIAL REPORTS.** The Constitution of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters makes specific provision for safeguarding the membership's money and union finances. The constitution requires a detailed audit by certified public accountants every year, which is to be submitted to the membership by the secretary-treasurer. A yearly finance committee of rank-and-file members, elected by the membership, each year examines the finances of the union and reports fully their findings and recommendations. Members of this committee may make dissenting reports, specific recommendations and separate findings.

**TRUST FUNDS.** All trust funds of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District are administered in accordance with the provisions of various trust fund agreements. All these agreements specify that the trustees in charge of these funds shall equally consist of union and management representatives and their alternates. All expenditures and disbursements of trust funds are made only upon approval by a majority of the trustees. All trust fund financial records are available at the headquarters of the various trust funds.

**SHIPPING RIGHTS.** A member's shipping rights and seniority are protected exclusively by contracts between the union and the employers. Members should get to know their shipping rights. Copies of these contracts are posted and available in all union halls. If members believe there have been violations of their shipping or seniority rights as contained in the contracts between the union and the employers, they should notify the Seafarers Appeals Board by certified mail, return

receipt requested. The proper address for this is:

George Tricker, Chairman  
Seafarers Appeals Board  
5201 Capital Gateway Drive  
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Full copies of contracts as referred to are available to members at all times, either by writing directly to the union or to the Seafarers Appeals Board.

**CONTRACTS.** Copies of all SIU contracts are available in all SIU halls. These contracts specify the wages and conditions under which an SIU member works and lives aboard a ship or boat. Members should know their contract rights, as well as their obligations, such as filing for overtime (OT) on the proper sheets and in the proper manner. If, at any time, a member believes that an SIU patrolman or other union official fails to protect their contractual rights properly, he or she should contact the nearest SIU port agent.

**EDITORIAL POLICY — THE SEAFARERS LOG.** The *Seafarers LOG* traditionally has refrained from publishing any article serving the political purposes of any individual in the union, officer or member. It also has refrained from publishing articles deemed harmful to the union or its collective membership. This established policy has been reaffirmed by membership action at the September 1960 meetings in all constitutional ports. The responsibility for *Seafarers LOG* policy is vested in an editorial board which consists of the executive board of the union. The executive board may delegate, from among its ranks, one individual to carry out this responsibility.

**PAYMENT OF MONIES.** No monies are to be paid to anyone in any official capacity in the SIU unless an official union receipt is given for same. Under no circumstances should any member pay any money for any reason unless he is given such receipt. In the event anyone attempts to require any such payment be made without supplying a receipt, or if a member is required to make a payment and is given an official receipt, but feels that he or she should not have been required to make such payment, this should immediately be reported to union headquarters.

**CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS AND OBLIGATIONS.** Copies of the SIU Constitution are available in all union halls. All members should obtain copies of this constitution so as to familiarize themselves with its contents. Any time a member feels any other member or officer is attempting to deprive him or her of any constitutional right or obligation by any methods, such as dealing with charges, trials, etc., as well as all other details, the member so affected should immediately notify headquarters.

**EQUAL RIGHTS.** All members are guaranteed equal rights in employment and as members of the SIU. These rights are clearly set forth in the SIU Constitution and in the contracts which the union has negotiated with the employers. Consequently, no member may be discriminated against because of race, creed, color, sex, national or geographic origin.

If any member feels that he or she is denied the equal rights to which he or she is entitled, the member should notify union headquarters.

**SEAFARERS POLITICAL ACTIVITY DONATION (SPAD).** SPAD is a separate segregated fund. Its proceeds are used to further its objects and purposes including, but not limited to, furthering the political, social and economic interests of maritime workers, the preservation and furthering of the American merchant marine with improved employment opportunities for seamen and boatmen and the advancement of trade union concepts. In connection with such objects, SPAD supports and contributes to political candidates for elective office. All contributions are voluntary. No contribution may be solicited or received because of force, job discrimination, financial reprisal, or threat of such conduct, or as a condition of membership in the union or of employment. If a contribution is made by reason of the above improper conduct, the member should notify the Seafarers International Union or SPAD by certified mail within 30 days of the contribution for investigation and appropriate action and refund, if involuntary. A member should support SPAD to protect and further his or her economic, political and social interests, and American trade union concepts.

**NOTIFYING THE UNION —** If at any time a member feels that any of the above rights have been violated, or that he or she has been denied the constitutional right of access to union records or information, the member should immediately notify SIU President David Heindel at headquarters by certified mail, return receipt requested. The address is:

David Heindel, President  
Seafarers International Union  
5201 Capital Gateway Drive  
Camp Springs, MD 20746

# Welcome Ashore!

We pay tribute to our brothers and sisters of the SIU who have recently retired. THANK YOU for a job well done and we wish you fair winds and following seas.

## DEEP SEA

### JOSEPH AYE0

Brother Joseph Ayeo, 65, started sailing with the SIU in 2001 and first worked on the *Delaware Bay*. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded at the union-affiliated Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Ayeo most recently shipped on the *Alliance St. Louis* and lives in Yonkers, New York.



### GERY BYRD

Brother Gery Byrd, 66, joined the union in 1994, initially sailing aboard the *USNS Regulus*. He shipped in the steward department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Byrd concluded his career aboard the *Overseas Long Beach*. He resides in Kenner, Louisiana.



### CASEY CODDINGTON

Brother Casey Coddington, 65, became a member of the union in 1995. He shipped in the deck department and first sailed aboard the *Lawrence Gianella*. Brother Coddington upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school in 2001. He concluded his career aboard the *American Endurance* and makes his home in Reno, Nevada.



### CLIFFORD CRONAN

Brother Clifford Cronan, 65, signed on with the SIU in 2006. He first sailed aboard the *USNS Impeccable* and primarily worked in the deck department. Brother Cronan upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on several occasions. He last shipped on the *Louisiana* and lives in Coconut Grove, Florida.



### RIZALITO FRIGILLANA

Brother Rizalito Frigillana, 67, joined the Seafarers International Union in 2008 and first sailed aboard the *Manoa*. He worked in both the deck and engine departments. Brother Frigillana upgraded at the Piney Point school in 2023. He most recently sailed aboard the *North Star* and settled in Tacoma, Washington.



### STEPHEN GATELY

Brother Stephen Gately, 69, embarked on his career with the SIU in 2000 when he sailed on the *Jeb Stuart*. He shipped in the deck department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Gately concluded his career aboard the *Colorado Express*. He lives in Jacksonville, Florida.



### LESLIE JACOBS

Brother Leslie Jacobs, 66, signed on with the union in 1992. He initially sailed aboard the *Diamond State* and worked in the deck department. Brother Jacobs upgraded often at the Piney Point school. He most recently shipped on the *Overseas Houston* and is a resident of North Richland Hills, Texas.



### NELLIE JONES

Sister Nellie Jones, 60, started sailing with the SIU in 1995 when she shipped with Delta Queen Steamboat Company. She sailed in the steward department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Sister Jones' final vessel was the *USNS Altair*. She makes her home in Belle Chasse, Louisiana.

### JOSE LOPEZ RODRIGUEZ

Brother Jose Lopez Rodriguez, 63, began his career with the Seafarers International Union in 1997. A deck department member, he first sailed with Crowley Puerto Rico Services. Brother Lopez Rodriguez upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. He last shipped on the *Maersk Alaska* and resides in Ponce, Puerto Rico.



### DENNIS REDDING

Brother Dennis Redding, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1990 and first worked aboard the *USNS Pollux*. He shipped in the steward department and concluded his career on the *Zera L. Tanner*. Brother Redding makes his home in North Attleboro, Massachusetts.



### REYNALDO RICARTE

Brother Reynaldo Ricarte, 68, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1996. He was a steward department member and first shipped on the *Independence*. Brother Ricarte upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. He most recently sailed on the *Delaware Express* and lives in Cibolo, Texas.



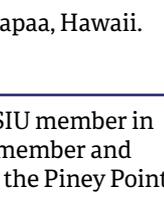
### EDWARD STANFIELD

Brother Edward Stanfield, 65, joined the union in 1998 and first sailed aboard the *Independence*. He was a member of the deck department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Stanfield last shipped on the *Pride of America* and settled in Kapaa, Hawaii.



### JAMES TIMS

Brother James Tims, 76, became an SIU member in 1968. He was an engine department member and upgraded on numerous occasions at the Piney Point school. Brother Tims' first vessel was the *Trans Huron*; his last, the *Robert E. Lee*. He makes his home in Purvis, Mississippi.



## GREAT LAKES

### CORNELIUS GLEASON

Brother Cornelius Gleason, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers International Union in 1988 when he shipped on the *American Republic*. He worked in the deck department and concluded his career aboard the *Sam Laud*. Brother Gleason resides in Grant Township, Michigan.

### SCOTT HANSON

Brother Scott Hanson, 65, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1979. A deck department member, he initially sailed aboard the *Merle McCurdy*. Brother Hanson last shipped on the *Walter J. McCarthy* and lives in Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin.



### ROBERT HEATH

Brother Robert Heath, 65, became a member of the union in 1979. He worked in both the deck and steward departments. Brother Heath initially sailed aboard the *C.L. Austin*. He upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions and concluded his career aboard the *J.A.W. Iglehart*. Brother Heath resides in Clay, Michigan.



## INLAND

### NELSON BREAUX

Brother Nelson Breaux, 67, signed on with the union in 1979. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded his skills on multiple occasions at the Piney Point school. Brother Breaux was employed with G&H Towing for the duration of his career. He resides in Dickinson, Texas.

### JOSEPH CARSON

Brother Joseph Carson, 69, donned the SIU colors in 1978. He was a deck department member and upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Carson worked with Crescent Towing and Salvage for his entire career. He calls Mandeville, Louisiana, home.



### EMMANUEL FIAKPUI

Brother Emmanuel Fiakpui, 76, began sailing with the Seafarers International Union in 2007, initially working aboard the *Terrapin Island*. Brother Fiakpui was a deck department member. He upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions and concluded his career aboard the *Dodge Island*. He makes his home in Houston.



### KENNETH KUEHNE

Brother Kenneth Kuehne, 58, joined the SIU in 1996. A deck department member, he was first employed with Westbank Riverboat Services. Brother Kuehne upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on several occasions. He last shipped aboard the *Integrity* and settled in Marrero, Louisiana.



## NMU

### SILVANO GERONILLA

Brother Silvano Geronilla, 69, signed on with the union during the 2001 SIU/NMU merger. He shipped in the deck department and concluded his career aboard the *Kenai*. Brother Geronilla lives in Panorama City, California.

### JOSEPH KEEFE

Brother Joseph Keefe, 70, joined the union during the 2001 NMU/SIU merger. He shipped in the deck department and concluded his career with Woods Hole Shipping. Brother Keefe makes his home in Fairhaven, Massachusetts.

### ROBIN WELCH

Brother Robin Welch, 70, signed on with the union in 2001, during the NMU/SIU merger. A deck department member, Brother Welch last sailed aboard the *Delaware Trader*. He resides in Liberty, Missouri.

# Final Departures

In solemn remembrance, we honor the legacies of these union members who have crossed the final bar. May they rest in peace.

## DEEP SEA

### ATANACIO BERNARDEZ

Pensioner Atanacio Bernardez, 78, died August 6. He joined the union in 2000 and initially sailed aboard the *Liberty*. Brother Bernardez worked in the deck department. He concluded his career aboard the *Maersk Ohio*, and went on pension in 2015. Brother Bernardez called Dorchester, Massachusetts, home.



### ROGER CLEGG

Pensioner Roger Clegg, 74, passed away September 26. He became a member of the SIU in 2005 when he shipped on the *Pride of Aloha*. Brother Clegg sailed in the engine department. He last shipped aboard the *Pride of America*, and became a pensioner in 2018. Brother Clegg made his home in the Philippines.



### JEROME DAVIS

Pensioner Jerome Davis, 77, died November 2. He began his career with the Seafarers in 1981, initially sailing aboard the *Santa Maria*. Brother Davis was a steward department member and last sailed on the *Washington Express*. He lived in Newark, New Jersey.



### JAMES GAINES

Pensioner James Gaines, 68, passed away November 29. He signed on with the Seafarers International Union in 1978 when he sailed aboard the *Cove Leader*. Brother Gaines worked in the engine department, and concluded his career aboard the *American Condor* in 1992. He went on pension in 2022 and resided in Jacksonville, Florida.



### JOE HARRIS

Pensioner Joe Harris, 87, died December 23. He joined the SIU in 1964 and first sailed with Interocean American Shipping. Brother Harris sailed in the engine department and last shipped on the *Guayama*. He was a resident of Jacksonville, Florida.



### ROBERT MASCHMEIER

Pensioner Robert Maschmeier, 69, passed away December 27. He began his career with the Seafarers in 1982, initially working on the *Leo*. Brother Maschmeier was a steward department member and concluded his career aboard the *Yosemite Trader*. He began collecting his pension in 2021 and resided in Louisiana, Missouri.



### JOSE MOLINA

Pensioner Jose Molina, 85, died December 6. He donned the SIU colors in 1967, first sailing aboard the *Topa Topa*. Brother Molina sailed in both the deck and engine departments and also worked on shore gangs. He last worked with World Crane Services before becoming a pensioner in 2000. Brother Molina lived in Tampa, Florida.



### CLARENCE MOSLEY

Pensioner Clarence Mosley, 71, passed away January 3. He embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1978 when he sailed aboard the *Delta Columbia*. Brother Mosley was an engine department member. He last shipped on the *USNS Able* in 1997. He became a pensioner in 2020 and resided in Norfolk, Virginia.

## GREAT LAKES

### JOSEPH NOVAK

Pensioner Joseph Novak, 93, died November 26. He joined the union in 1960 and first worked with American Steamship. Brother Novak was a member of the steward department. He last sailed aboard the *St. Clair* and settled in Plymouth, Pennsylvania.



## INLAND

### JAMES ANDERSON

Pensioner James Anderson, 76, passed away November 23. He signed on with the SIU in 1969 when he worked with Inland Tugs. Brother Anderson was a deck department member. He concluded his career with Seabulk before becoming a pensioner in 2014. Brother Anderson lived in St. Louis.



### JOSEPH ARNAUD

Pensioner Joseph Arnaud, 86, died December 18. He embarked on his career with the union in 1964. A deck department member, Brother Arnaud was first employed with Higman Barge Lines. He last worked for Dixie Carriers, and began collecting his pension in 2003. Brother Arnaud resided in Arnaudville, Louisiana.

### JACK GONZALEZ

Pensioner Jack Gonzalez, 81, passed away January 3. He joined the SIU in 1986. A deck department member, Brother Gonzalez was employed with G&H Towing for the duration of his career. He became a pensioner in 2007 and made his home in Robstown, Texas.



### CHARLES JOHNSON

Pensioner Charles Johnson, 82, died December 25. He joined the union in 1990 when he shipped with Crowley Puerto Rico Services. Brother Johnson sailed in the deck department and last shipped aboard the *Ascension*. He went on pension in 2010 and resided in Hudson, Florida.



### ARVIS LOLLEY

Pensioner Arvis Lolley, 94, passed away December 26. He embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1971. Brother Lolley was a deck department member and sailed with Dravo Basic Materials for his entire career. He retired in 1992 and lived in Semmes, Alabama.



## NMU

### JAMES ADAM

Pensioner James Adam, 71, died December 14. Brother Adam worked in the deck department. He last sailed aboard the *Lykes Navigator*, and went on pension in 2019. Brother Adam was a resident of Picayune, Mississippi.



### ROBERT BRADLEY

Pensioner Robert Bradley, 82, passed away December 23. Brother Bradley last sailed aboard the *Lash Italia*. He became a pensioner in 2011 and was a resident of Portsmouth, Virginia.



### CARLTON CYRUS

Pensioner Carlton Cyrus, 90, died December 19. Brother Cyrus worked in the deck department. He last shipped on the *St. Louis Express* before retiring in 2004. Brother Cyrus lived in Buffalo, New York.



### CLEVE HENDERSON

Pensioner Cleve Henderson, 71, passed away August 17. Brother Henderson worked in the deck department and last shipped on the *Cape Avinof*. He became a pensioner in 2009 and settled in Portsmouth, Virginia.



### MAXINE JULIEN

Pensioner Maxine Julien, 93, died December 19. Sister Julien sailed in the steward department. She concluded her career aboard the *Cape Texas* and began collecting her pension in 1998. Sister Julien lived in Houston.

### OLLIE OWENS

Pensioner Ollie Owens, 97, died December 25. He started sailing in 1945, initially aboard the *Ethan Allen*. Brother Owens worked in the steward department. He retired in 1968 and settled in Baltimore.



# Paul Hall Center Upgrading Course Dates

Printed below are dates for courses scheduled to take place at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, located in Piney Point, Maryland. The QR code connects to a web page with the latest course dates (they may differ from what's printed here, though in most cases the only changes are additions that haven't yet made it into the LOG). Seafarers are welcome to contact the admissions office with questions about upgrading courses: (301) 899-0657, [admissions@seafarers.org](mailto:admissions@seafarers.org)

Latest Course Dates



Title of Course	Start Date	Date of Completion
<b>DECK DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES</b>		
Able Seafarer - Deck	June 8	June 26
RFPNW	May 4 June 29 August 3	May 22 July 17 August 21
Water Survival	May 11 June 8	May 22 June 19
<b>ENGINE DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES</b>		
Boiler Technician (FOWT)	May 4	May 29
Junior Engineer	May 18	July 10
Marine Electrician	August 3	September 4
Marine Refrigeration Tech.	June 22	July 31
Adv. Refrig. Cont. Maint. (ARCM)	June 1	June 12
Welding	June 1	June 19

<b>STEWARD DEPARTMENT UPGRADING COURSES</b>		
Certified Chief Cook	June 22 August 31 November 9	August 28 November 6 January 15, 2027
Galley Operations	May 4	May 29
Chief Steward	May 25	June 19
Adv. Galley Operations	April 27	May 22
<b>OPEN/SAFETY UPGRADING COURSES</b>		
Basic Training Revalidation	May 4 May 8 June 15	May 4 May 8 June 15
Government Vessels	April 20 May 18	April 24 May 22
Basic Training/Adv. FF Reval.	June 1 August 17 November 2	June 2 August 18 November 3

## Notice

## Upgrading Class Registration Now Available Online

Recently, the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education has unveiled a new option for mariners looking to continue improving and upgrading their skills: The class registration form is now online. Simply fill out the form with your information, check which classes you are interested in, and hit Submit. This will make the course registration process faster, more modern and easier than ever for members to use.



Please visit [www.seafarers.org/upgrading-application](http://www.seafarers.org/upgrading-application), or scan the QR code at right.



AB Tyler Brown steers through the pack ice with Ice Captain Leroid Jones Jr. and 3M Tristin Woolf.



An orca (also known as a killer whale) pokes its head out from the ice.

## Operation Deep Freeze a Yearly Tradition

Continued from Page 20

Point. "Immediately adjacent to the dock is a hut on what's called Hut Point, which was used by the Scott expedition and the Shackleton expedition to store supplies," she explained. "Those supplies remain untouched in the hut from over 100 years ago, including just dead seals that they were burning for heat, or the box of biscuits that Ernest Shackleton left, and they're just on the ground. It's just there. There's no barrier between you and history. The director of the recreation department opened the hut specifically for us and gave us a tour, and that was amazing. I was very, very excited, because it was an untouched slice of history, and it's still there in its exact condition."

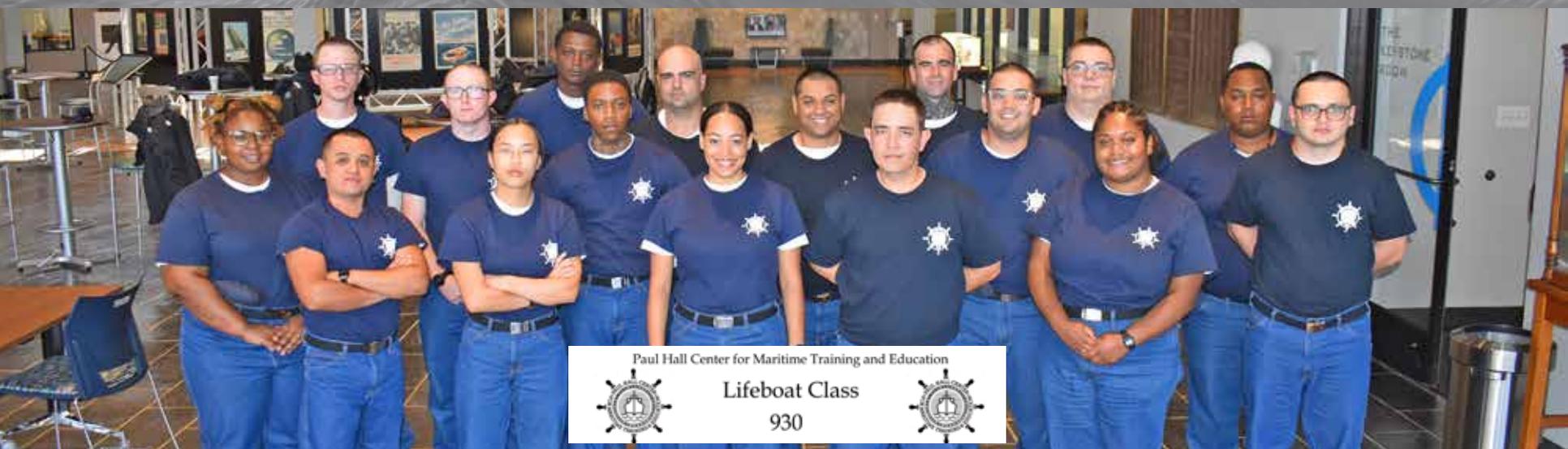
The base reminded Groenleer of college. "You go there and there's dorms, you've got the gym, you've got a little coffee shop, you've got a couple of bars, you have the cafeteria. It was like, cold, grad school," she said.

The 900 or so people living and working at the base at McMurdo Station treated the ODF participants with the utmost hospitality. "Some people work for the Air Force, and some work for the National Science Foundation, and some were maintenance workers, or PhD students," Groenleer said. "Everyone lives in a big dorm, and they have what looks like a college cafeteria, and the people in charge of supplying that concession do a great job."

In return for their kindness, the *Stena Polaris* crew gave several tours of the ship to those who were interested.

"I'm just really grateful to the people that worked at McMurdo for having us and treating us so well and that the operation was a success," Groenleer concluded.

# Paul Hall Center Class Photos



Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education  
**Lifeboat Class**  
 930

**APPRENTICE WATER SURVIVAL CLASS #930** – Recently graduated: Nicholas Amore, Joseph Breece II, Roland Evans II, Brandon Foreman, Erica Fu, Gustavo Garayua Lanza, Oscar Garibaldi, Lawrence Gonzales II, Ivan Hassan, Delvonta Haynes, William Land, De'aizja Martin, Sean Mullen, Taiyo Nakata, Astrid Ortiz, Shawn Richard, Paul Schad and Jacquita Theriot.



**TANK SHIP FAMILIARIZATION - PHASE 1 (LG)** – Graduated February 13: James Artis, Elijah Busch, Daniel Cho, Kelvin Huffman, Kaitlyn Lipka, Alec Neace, Joseph Romanowski, Cameron Slayton, Dylan Storie, Maciej Szymkowski, Dena Turner and Cole Waddell.



**TANK SHIP FAMILIARIZATION (LG)** – Graduated February 13: Jatarvis Fryer Jr., Cotisha Long-Green, Christian Perez Gonzalez and Renita Walker.



**GALLEY OPS** – Graduated February 13 (not all are pictured): Victoria Butler, Shemekia Donald, Robert Edwards, Ryan Hatch, Jasmine Pascal, Jalen Shuman and Shakisha West.



**WELDING** – Graduated February 27: Jason Bullen, Joshua Higdon, Fernando Macato, Tariq Mamudu and Samuel Penn. Instructor Chris Raley is at far right.



**GOVERNMENT VESSELS** – Graduated February 13: Randy Amezcuita Montalvo, Morgan Boekhout, Kevin Castillo, Syniaya Lane, Christopher Lazo, Alma Lewis, Ryan McKinnon, Abraham Quintus, Julius Rogers, Hadi Selim, Dakota Snow, Joseph Vermeulen, Tevin White, Ciarra Wiggins and Kimberly Wilson.

# Paul Hall Center Class Photos



**RFPNW** – Graduated March 6 (not all are pictured): Gustavo Anavitate, Hyjalun Burch, Kendell Dorsey, Brandon Givens, Kenneth Gonzalez, Kelton Greene, Christopher Jack, Kainoa MacKenzie, David Ray and Ricardo Vasquez.



**ADV. GALLEY OPS** – Graduated February 27: Adam Bechtold, William Fortner, Marcel Jubert, Sandra Norato, Wilson Palacios Arriola and Gina Settle.



**ADV. REFER CONTAINER MAINTENANCE** – Graduated recently: Alvin Alcasid, Alberto Magsucang, Daryl Thomas Jr. and Saddam Yahia. Instructor Mike Fay is at the far right, and Instructor Andrew Phelps is at the far left.



**SERVE SAFE MANAGEMENT** – Graduated February 20: Randy Amezquita Montalvo, Syniaya Lane, Alma Lewis and Kimberly Wilson.



**WATER SURVIVAL (UPGRADERS)** – Graduated February 27: Tanesha Terrell (above) and Nolan Walker.



**TANK SHIP FAMILIARIZATION (DL)** – Graduated February 20 (not all are pictured): Alharath Ahmed, Jose Argueta, Christopher Branch, Rio Cuellar, Ricky Desir, Jarrell Dorsey, Joaquim Ganeto, Marlon Green, Mark Griffin, Gabriel Guardiola Berrios Jr., Clarence Johnson III, Tousif Khan, Kia Major, Abdulalah Mohamed, Christopher Moore, Anthony Overholt, Nicholas Parker, Delia Peters, Ariana Ross, Jason Springer, Anpeng Sun, LBJ Tanoa, Jeremy Thigpen and Michael Zabielski..

# SEAFARERS LOG

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SEAFARERS INTERNATIONAL UNION – ATLANTIC, GULF, LAKES AND INLAND WATERS, AFL-CIO

## SIU Delivers in Operation Deep Freeze

SIU members earlier this year upheld their decades-long tradition of supporting a crucial resupply mission named Operation Deep Freeze (ODF).

Seafarers sailing aboard the *Stena Polaris* (Intrepid Personnel and Provisioning) journeyed to McMurdo Station in Antarctica, and wrapped up on-site operations Jan. 20. They helped transport and deliver fuel to the scientific outpost.

Before the Christmas holiday, the *Stena Polaris* loaded up fuel cargo in Greece to deliver to McMurdo Station. This was the vessel's first time participating in ODF, and with the assistance of Navy Cargo Battalion ONE, the *Stena Polaris* supplied five million gallons of AN8 diesel fuel (a blend made specifically for the Antarctic region), more than 400,000 gallons of aviation fuel, and 126,000 gallons of gasoline.

According to MSC Pacific's McMurdo Station representative, Lt. Emily Spath, all parties involved work together to facilitate the delivery process in advance. "The National Science Foundation contracts fuel specialists who operate the terminal at McMurdo Station, the U.S. Coast Guard provides ice escort services for the vessel, and MSC (the Military Sealift Command) coordinates closely with the ship's crew and personnel ashore to ensure a safe and successful operation," she said.

SIU members aboard the *Stena Polaris* for this journey included Bosun **James Gregory**, ABs **Harriet Groenleer**, **Eden Dulin** and **Dylan Wright**, STOS **Tyler Brown**, QEP **Rayshawn Buksha**, Wiper **Abdelhamid Dika**, EUs **Adam Ferkula** and **Diamond Jackson**, Steward/Baker **Xavier Burgos**, Chief Cook **Anthony Jackson**, and SA **Tahj Ligon**.

The first ODF took place in 1955. American-flag ships have supported the mission every year.

Groenleer, who was participating in ODF for the first time, assisted with basic tanker duties on the *Stena Polaris*, including lookout, steering, maintenance, and cargo ops.

Groenleer's recollection of the voyage timeline is as follows: "We left Piraeus, Greece, around Thanksgiving, and then we went to Rota, Spain, for a couple of days. We left Rota and went to Cape Town, South Africa, and we were there just before Christmas. Then from Cape Town, we went to McMurdo Station, and we arrived at the Winter Quarters Bay on, I believe, Jan. 19." Traveling between ports took around a month, and then the shipboard personnel spent a week or so in Antarctica.



The *Stena Polaris* docks at McMurdo Station. U.S.-flag ships like this one have steadfastly supported Operation Deep Freeze for more than 70 years.

Seafarers face several challenges when journeying to the south pole, where the mean annual temperature is  $-18^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $0^{\circ}\text{F}$ ), but can reach as low as  $-50^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $-58^{\circ}\text{F}$ ) during the winter months. The environment is one of the coldest on earth but also can be dry and windy, which complicates the fuel transfer process. To meet the conditions of the environment, mariners must plan ahead and make additional coordination and operation considerations to ensure safe and successful delivery.

By design, ODF takes place during the austral summer, when temperatures can reach as high as  $8^{\circ}\text{C}$  ( $46^{\circ}\text{F}$ ). Because of this, Groenleer said, the weather conditions were not so bad. "I'm going to be honest with you. I have done two winters on the Great Lakes, and they were way worse," she stated.

Antarctica has six months of day and six months of night which are referred to as the austral summer and winter, respectively. Also, regions located below the equator experience seasons at opposite times from locations in the northern hemisphere, like the United States for example.

"It's going to be night on March 20 (the date of the spring equinox), so we [completed the mission] in 24-hour daylight," Groenleer noted. "It wasn't really that windy most of the time, and the temperatures were in the 20s and 30s. So, it was cold, but it wasn't horrible."

She continued, "We had to carry additional crew members to keep a better lookout for ice, so

that's why we had the ice pilot and the ice captain. Somebody was always on watch that had polar certification."

They also used a special radar on the ship to navigate around icebergs, which could sometimes take several days. Icebergs often are surrounded by fog, which can lead to further delays.

Seafarers took special precautions to maintain the environmental cleanliness of the region. "We couldn't throw food waste over the side of the ship below 60 degrees latitude, out of concern for bird diseases," Groenleer recalled. "Even aside from the oil, we were careful. At a certain point you couldn't even run the incinerator, because of the air pollution and impacts on the ice."

The *Stena Polaris* crew also kept an extremely thorough watch on the ship's hoses, flanges, and connections to preserve the sensitivity of the Antarctic ecosystem because many species are found there that exist nowhere else in the world.

Moreover, they were issued polar survival gear in case of an abandon-ship situation, and they participated in additional drills that were specific to the environment.

But, after the hard work was done, ODF participants enjoyed the singular experience of being on the Antarctic continent. One of the highlights for Groenleer was receiving an opportunity to visit Hut

**Continued on Page 17**



SIU and AMO members aboard the tanker *Stena Polaris* (Intrepid) recently took part in Operation Deep Freeze, which supplies fuel to the southernmost port in the world at McMurdo Station, Antarctica. Standing from left are 3AE Marcus Adam, 3AE Cordell Johnson, 2M Bobby Sirois, 2AE Connor Daly, CM Joey Mainella, AB Tyler Brown, SA Tahj Ligon, Pumpman Rayshawn Buksha, ABM Harriet Groenleer, QMED Adam Ferkula, AB Dylan Wright, Wiper Ahamid Dika, QMED Diamond Jackson, 2M Kirsten Snyder, 3M Tristin Woolf, 3M George Bellenger, CE Alan Hamond, Cadet Erin Stillenger, Ice Captain Leroid Jones Jr., and Contractor Adam Meller. Kneeling in front (from left) are Captain Carl Schoenbucher, Chief Cook Anthony Jackson, Cadet Katie Howe, and Chief Steward Xavier Burgos. (Photos by Ice Pilot Rob Lee)



Two of what appear to be crabeater seals found in the Antarctic