

SEAFARERS LOG

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

COVID-19 PANDEMIC



As the world grapples with the global spread of the COVID-19 virus, SIU members continue delivering vital cargoes and supporting American military personnel (generic image at immediate right). At press time, the only SIU-crewed vessels known to be out of service as a result of the pandemic were the cruise ship *Pride of America* and numerous NY Waterway passenger ferries. The hospital ships *USNS Mercy* (above, left) and *USNS Comfort* (above, right) have mobilized to provide relief by treating non-coronavirus patients in Los Angeles and New York, respectively. The civilian crews of the hospital ships include members of the SIU Government Services Division. The SIU has taken significant steps to help ensure members' safety while also facilitating the flow of crucial commerce. Mariners have been declared essential workers by federal and state governments. *Pages 2-4.* (*USNS Mercy* photo by Mass Communications Specialist 2nd Class Kelsey Adams; *USNS Comfort* photo by Bill Mesta.



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President's Report

We're Up to the Challenge

As of this writing in early April, our country was bracing for what was expected to be a surge of confirmed coronavirus cases, despite nationwide efforts to limit their spread.

You all know that the COVID-19 pandemic is tragic, complicated and unpredictable. It has upended what we recently considered "normal life" in so many ways. The loss of lives around the world has been devastating; the economic harm figures to be massive.



Michael Sacco

There are two things above all else that I want SIU members and your families to know. First, every decision made by me and our other officials has been done first and foremost with your wellbeing in mind. We have been conducting weekly SIU video conferences (along with participating in what sometimes feels like a million conference calls with various agencies and operators). I open and close those SIU-specific online meetings the same way: by telling everyone to keep safety at the absolute top of the list in every single action we take.

The second main point is that we will indeed get through this together. Our organization has a rock-solid history of rising to the occasion, no matter the circumstances. Our members take a backseat to no one when it comes to serving as America's fourth arm of defense.

No one knows how long the pandemic will last, but better days lie ahead – and SIU-crewed vessels will help lead the way in the recovery.

Meanwhile, please make sure you're getting the latest union news from our website, from our text service if you're so inclined, and definitely from the hiring halls, which are staffed as usual and reachable by phone and email even though they're closed to walk-ins. As many of you know, we're active on social media as well, so that's another way to keep up with announcements.

I know you'll stick together, support each other, and keep up your wonderful professionalism aboard the ships. There's a reason the U.S. Merchant Marine has been designated as an essential part of the workforce – and there is no doubt we'll deliver.

Jones Act Turns 100

On a much different note, next month marks the centennial for arguably the most important maritime law in U.S. history. The Jones Act always has been vital to America's national, economic and homeland security. Without it, the American-flag fleet would be wiped out, as would the pool of U.S. citizen mariners who crew our commercial and military-support vessels. In turn, our country would face monumental security risks as foreign-flag vessels and boats and foreign crews had free reign on our rivers, waterways and coastlines.

The Jones Act regularly comes under attack by foreign-flag interests and misguided free-traders who don't give a damn about the U.S. Merchant Marine or America's better interests. They conveniently overlook the bipartisan support enjoyed by the nation's freight cabotage law, along with the top-level backing from our military leaders. And don't expect the anti-Jones Act crowd to acknowledge the 653,000 American jobs supported by the law, or the fact that 91 nations around the world maintain some form of cabotage law.

The Jones Act was exceptionally sound policy when it was enacted in June 1920. Today, it's arguably more important than ever, and I'm proud to lead all of us in supporting it.

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The Seafarers International Union engaged an environmentally friendly printer for the production of this newspaper.

Maritime Labor Leaders Urge Congress: Protect Jones Act

The heads of nine maritime-oriented labor organizations, including SIU President Michael Sacco, recently fired off a letter to the chairs and ranking members of the House Transportation and Infrastructure and the House Armed Services committees to preserve the nation's freight cabotage law (the Jones Act) as they crafted legislation to help American workers and businesses caught in the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

The letter arrived on Capitol Hill on March 19 as foreign-flag interests were scheming new ways to cripple the 100-year-old law that states cargo moved from one domestic port to another must be carried aboard U.S.-crewed, U.S.-built, U.S.-owned and U.S.-flagged vessels.

As hotel, casino, restaurant, retail, transportation and manufacturing workers were being laid off, some were calling for financial assistance to the foreign-flag cruise ship industry, which pays little to no federal taxes.

The letter reads: "As you may be aware, a number of groups and individuals are attempting to use the current coronavirus pandemic as a rationale to waive one or more of our nation's maritime cabotage laws. We strongly oppose such efforts and ask your help to ensure that such harmful, unwarranted and unjustifiable waivers of the cabotage laws are not included in the various stimulus packages designed to help the American

worker and American industries.

"At a time when American workers and their families are facing economic hardship, the public health crisis should not be exploited to the benefit of foreign-flagged industries that do not employ American workers, avoid paying U.S. taxes, pay substandard wages to their foreign employees and want to use these hard times to break into our nation's vital industries," the letter continued. "We oppose any efforts to waive the Jones Act that would undermine the wellbeing of American mariners and the domestic maritime workforce. When this crisis is over, irresponsibly weakening the fundamental laws governing the U.S. maritime industry would only contribute to the growing loss of American jobs to foreign interests.

"We thank you for your consistent support for the American maritime worker and appreciate your efforts to protect American maritime jobs," the letter concludes.

It was signed by Sacco; MEBA President Marshall Ainley; SUP President Dave Connolly; AMO President Paul Doell; Maritime Trades Department Executive Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Duncan; MM&P President Don Marcus; MFOW President Anthony Poplawski; IBU of the Pacific President Marina Secchitano; and Transportation Trades Department President Larry Willis.

Jones Act Support Evident in Hearing

The leader of the U.S. Maritime Administration and a U.S. congressman both expressed strong backing for America's freight cabotage law during a March 11 hearing on Capitol Hill.

Their respective comments were made as the House Armed Services Subcommittees on Readiness and Seapower and Projection Forces conducted a joint hearing on Sealift and Mobility Requirements and the National Defense Strategy.

U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney (D-Connecticut), chairman of the Subcommittee on Seapower and Projection Forces, stated, "This year marks the 100th anniversary of the Jones Act. For a century the Jones Act has helped promote a robust domestic maritime industry while preserving our nation's security. We are a maritime nation and

the Jones Act is one of the foundation pillars of a strong maritime policy now and in the future."

Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby said, "We also remain committed to our domestic Jones Act fleet. Jones Act requirements support U.S. shipyards and repair facilities, sustained supply chains that produce and repair American-built ships and the employment of U.S. citizen mariners. It is the indispensable foundation of the U.S. maritime industry and our economic and national security."

The Jones Act, which supports approximately 650,000 American jobs, requires that cargo moving between domestic ports is carried aboard ships that are crewed, built, flagged and owned American.

Approximately 90 nations around the world maintain some form of cabotage law.

News Article Further Exposes Pitfalls of Runaway-Flags

A story posted by *Politico* on March 11 focused on how the United States could not effectively deal with the recent coronavirus health scares aboard foreign-flag cruise ships, even though a great many Americans were passengers.

"The cruise industry disproportionately counts Americans as customers but operates primarily in international waters and avoids tough scrutiny by registering ships mostly in small Caribbean countries with little incentive to enforce international treaties," wrote Tanya Snyder in an article titled "Coronavirus on the High Seas: Why the U.S. Can't Touch Cruise Lines."

"That has led to a hodgepodge of loosely enforced standards, which regulators in the U.S. won't be able to change quickly," the story added.

The article identifies the cruise lines sailing under so-called "flags of convenience," a system the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) has fought against for decades. (The SIU is affiliated with the London-based ITF, which is composed of more than 650 transportation-related unions from 150 countries.)

The flag-of-convenience (FOC) system, also known as runaway flags, allows vessel owners from one nation to register their ships in a different country that features lower standards for worker qualifications, safety, pay and taxes, and hire crews from still other nations. (Like the ITF, the SIU also has fought against FOCs for many years.)

"In essence, cruise ships are a regulatory black hole," Snyder wrote.

The *Politico* story listed several attempts by members of the Congress to upgrade the United States' ability to better enforce health and safety policies on cruise ships with American passengers. These attempts have failed.

More recently, international media focused on pas-

sengers on several cruise ships being stranded aboard their vessels because the coronavirus was detected among both the crew and tourists. Once a ship docks, according to *Politico*, a country can apply some jurisdiction.

"A Japanese infectious diseases expert was allowed onto the *Diamond Princess*, where more than 600 passengers were infected with the coronavirus, released a video on YouTube blasting the 'chaotic' process to try to control the spread of the disease on board the ship, conducted by people with no background in infection control," Snyder wrote.

Cruise lines have been among the hardest hit during the recent stock market downturn, which led to talk about a possible bailout for the industry, much of which is based in Florida.

When *Politico* reached out to the chairman of the House Transportation Committee, U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon), regarding such a proposal, he replied, "They aren't American. They don't pay taxes in the United States of America. If they want to re-flag their ships ... and pay U.S. wages and pay U.S. taxes, then maybe."

FOC cruise lines did not receive money in the relief bill that was enacted in late March.

Meanwhile, the ITF over the years has brought thousands of FOC cargo ships under ITF contract while striving to promote a genuine link between flag states and vessels. As pointed out by the ITF, for workers, runaway-flag shipping can mean "very low wages, poor on-board conditions, inadequate food and clean drinking water, and long periods of work without proper rest, leading to stress and fatigue."

The federation further notes that by "flagging out, shipowners can take advantage of minimal regulation, cheap registration fees, low or no taxes, and freedom to employ cheap labor from the global labor market."

SIU Members Deliver Despite Pandemic

Deemed “essential workers” by the federal government, SIU members remained on the job as the world continued grappling with a devastating pandemic.

By early April, the coronavirus outbreak had sickened hundreds of thousands around the world, killed tens of thousands, and severely damaged the global economy. United Nations Secretary General António Guterres said the COVID-19 pandemic signaled a challenge unseen since World War II.

“It is a combination, on one hand, of a disease that represents a threat to everybody in the world and, second, because it has an economic impact that will bring a recession that probably has no parallel in the recent past,” he said. “This is, indeed, the most challenging crisis we have faced since the Second World War.”

For the SIU, the pandemic has led to unprecedented steps aimed at protecting individual safety while still facilitating the flow of essential commerce along with military support.

In late March, the union announced that its hiring halls were closed to non-employees until further notice, although members can still conduct their union business by phone, email and fax.

The SIU also publicized an agreement with many of its contracted companies that included temporary restrictions to ship, suspension of crew reliefs, and detailed protocols for combatting the virus.

At press time, the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan was finalizing modifications to various benefits in order to help members and their dependents.

The union-affiliated Paul Hall Cen-



Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly has his temperature read as part of a COVID-19 screening prior to a tour of the Seafarers-crewed hospital ship *USNS Mercy* in Los Angeles on March 31. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Natalie M. Byers)

ter for Maritime Training and Education (PHC), located in Piney Point, Maryland, also had taken exceptional steps to protect apprentices, upgraders and employ-

ees. The school in mid-March cancelled or postponed all upcoming classes. However, the PHC also continued to conduct courses already underway, while giving students the option to drop the class and leave, without penalty. At press time, only around a dozen upgraders were at the school, along with around 50 apprentices. Many steps were being taken to keep classrooms, offices and other parts of the campus sanitized while observing “social distancing,” a term that has come to dominate modern dialogue.

SIU headquarters cut back to a skeleton crew and was closed to visitors. Employees continued processing claims, pension checks and vacation applications. (Those Seafarers and retirees not already signed up for direct deposit were encouraged to enroll.) The membership assistance department and others also remained open, with reduced staff on hand and others teleworking.

Incredibly, as of March 31, the only members who’d been formally diagnosed with the coronavirus were aboard the cruise ship *Pride of America*. A very small number of positive cases were being addressed aboard the vessel. According to regular communications between the union, company and crew members, morale remained good, and all concerned were handling the situation well.

Similarly, rank-and-file reaction to the extraordinary circumstances largely seemed relatively upbeat and determined, notwithstanding questions about possible extra pay, restriction to ship, and crew changes. Seafarers on social media regularly encouraged each other, whether they were working or stuck at home because of various government orders. Members expressed a desire to rise to the occasion, stick together and get through the pandemic, and they clearly maintained a sense of humor despite the challenging circumstances.

Recertified Steward **Karl Meyer** wrote, “Sitting on the hook off Tianjin, China, moving boxes. Commerce does not stop, nor do we.”

Chief Cook **Sherron DeCoteau** posted, “I’m on the beach, but being safe and prepared to relieve my shipmates when needed.”

Chief Steward **Jorcell Davis** encouraged his fellow Seafarers with this popular post: “Steward depart, this is your time to do what you do best. People’s spirits are down and all they have to look forward to is three hot meals and a paycheck.... Put your foot on the gas and go above and beyond. We control the morale on the ships.... Bon voyage, stay safe out there.”

While most SIU-crewed vessels (deep sea, Great Lakes and inland) remained in operation, there were at least two notable exceptions. One is the aforementioned *Pride of America*. The other, collectively, is the passenger ferries owned and operated by NY Waterway.

Most of NY Waterway’s customers are daily commuters. With New York at the epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S., the company quickly went from having 180 captains and deckhands working aboard dozens of boats to only around a dozen mariners and two or three ferries.

By contrast, the SIU-crewed hospital ships *USNS Mercy* and *USNS Comfort* seemed to give the nation a boost when they were mobilized in late March. President Trump travelled to Norfolk, Virginia, to help see off the *Comfort* as it left for New York; Acting Secretary of the Navy Thomas B. Modly visited the *Mercy* in Los Angeles.

Those vessels’ respective crews include members of the SIU Government Services Division; the Masters, Mates and Pilots; and the Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association.

The hospital ships were deployed to help relieve overcrowding at hospitals by taking on non-coronavirus patients.

“This great ship behind me is a 70,000-ton message of hope and solidarity to the incredible people of New York, a place I know very well, a place I love,” Trump said, standing in front of the gleaming

Continued on next page

How to Obtain The Latest Union And Industry Info

The SIU is promptly posting and otherwise circulating union- and industry-specific updates related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Here are some ways members can stay informed:

Visit the SIU home page: www.seafarers.org. The page includes a prominent section dedicated to COVID-19 news.

Sign up for SIU text alerts. We use them sparingly, and anyone can opt out. To sign up, text the word “join” (without the quotation marks, and it’s not case-sensitive) to 97779.

Stay in touch with your hiring hall. As reported elsewhere, the halls are closed to non-employees, but are still staffed by union officials and office workers. Call them or email them.

For those on social media, check the SIU Facebook page (@SeafarersInternational). Our social-media sites also are linked on the home page of the SIU website. We’re also active on Twitter but generally don’t use that medium for time-sensitive communications to the membership.



The SIU home page includes a section dedicated to updates about the pandemic.

SIU President Sends Message to Membership

Editor's note: This communication was posted to the SIU website on March 23, and also was sent to a number of



SIU President Michael Sacco

vessels, federal agencies, and ship-operating companies.

Dear SIU Brothers and Sisters:

Thank you for your dedication, professionalism and patience as the world grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. Through your sacrifices and service, you are writing a significant chapter in SIU history.

While the worst part of the pandemic is, obviously, loss of life, I think the other greatest difficulty is not having many answers. People historically are very resilient when they understand the challenge. In this case, no one knows exactly what the "all clear" will look like or when it'll happen, or even the best way to get there.

But in the meantime, I cannot over-emphasize this point: Every decision and every action the SIU takes is being done with your safety and health in mind. The health of you and your loved ones is my top priority. The same goes for our officials and employees.

That is why, for instance, we not only didn't object to temporarily stopping routine crew changes and implementing restriction to ship, we supported it. The inconveniences are a sacrifice that

must be made in order to maximize your safety. In many ways, this is the ship-board version of helping "flatten curve" (slowing the virus' spread).

At the same time, and as you well know, our country depends on us. The U.S. Merchant Marine is vital to the nation's national, economic and homeland security. That's why it's so important for you to keep up the good work and guard your health. At some point, we also undoubtedly will be at the tip of the spear of the country's economic recovery. And, at all times, we still must be able to crew up ships if there's an activation.

The union is in virtually constant contact with our ship operators and the leaders at the Maritime Administration, TRANSCOM, and MSC. We're all pulling together and will continue doing so. I'm sure you're aware of some of the measures that have been implemented by those agencies, including travel, shore-leave and turnover restrictions. Like us, they're taking extraordinary measures because these are extraordinary times.

In that spirit, I well remember how SIU members realized that times had changed during the Middle East wars –

and how you responded in outstanding fashion. I know you'll do the same now.

Keep an eye on our website and social media pages for updates, and you can also stay in touch with your hiring hall. I also recommend periodically checking the National Maritime Center website – we're re-posting their announcements (for example, the recent one about credential extensions), but of course the information will land there first.

I also offer a special word of thanks to our members aboard the hospital ships *USNS Mercy* and *USNS Comfort* – and indeed, to all of our CIVMARS throughout the fleet. Thank you for stepping up during this time of need.

Last but definitely not least, I am sensitive to your concerns about your families as you make work-related sacrifices. This goes back to my main point: Every step the union takes is being done in order to maximize the chances of everyone reuniting in good health.

Thank you for upholding the finest traditions of the Brotherhood of the Sea.

In Solidarity,
Michael Sacco
President

President Trump Signs \$2.2 Trillion U.S. Stimulus Package into Law March 29

President Donald Trump on March 29 signed into law a massive \$2.2 trillion stimulus package in an attempt to alleviate the worst effects of the coronavirus pandemic on the American public and the U.S. economy.

According to several sources, the far-reaching legislation stands as the largest emergency aid package in U.S. history. It represents an enormous financial injection into a struggling economy with provisions aimed at helping American workers, small businesses and industries grappling with the economic disruption.

A centerpiece of the stimulus package is that it will provide direct financial assistance to Americans in the form of checks, with the amount received based on income.

Individuals who earn \$75,000 in adjusted gross income or less will get one-time direct payments of \$1,200 each, with married couples earning up to \$150,000 receiving \$2,400 – and an additional \$500 per child. The payment will scale down by income, phasing out entirely at \$99,000 for singles and \$198,000 for couples without children.

It also gives money to directly to state governments, and bolsters the unemployment benefits program. Under the law, jobless benefits will be extended to those not normally covered, such as freelancers and workers in the gig economy.

In addition, the package will provide billions of dollars in aid to hard-hit hospitals struggling to deal with the outbreak as well for state and local governments that are cash-strapped due to their response to coronavirus.

The new law will also provide distressed businesses and industries with hundreds of billions of dollars – \$500 billion to be exact – in zero-interest loans, tax breaks, and other emergency aid. That portion of the package sparked criticism from progressive

lawmakers like Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-New York), who attacked it on the House floor as a corporate bailout.

"We have to go into this vote eyes wide open. What did the Senate majority fight for," she said. "One of the largest corporate bailouts with as few strings as possible in American history. Shameful! The greed of that fight is wrong for crumbs for our families. And the option that we have is to either let them suffer with nothing or to allow this greed and billions of dollars, which will be leveraged into trillions of dollars, to contribute to the largest income inequality gap in our future."

In a compromise move, the final deal provided for accountability through an independent Inspector General and congressional oversight panel regarding how these funds are dispersed.

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka, appearing on Fox Business, had a mixed reaction. "The (Senate) bill makes many important investments" but "it falls short in protecting frontline workers and does nothing to preserve America's pensions," he said.

Service Employees President Mary Kay Henry agreed, calling the measure "a good first step to address the economic and health problems faced by working people of all races and ethnicities." But it's "no substitute" for coordinated administration action.

"We still need to do more," she said. "Congress should immediately begin work on a new bill that ensures every working American has paid sick days, everyone can get coronavirus testing and treatment free of charge, no matter their immigration status, and working people continue to come before corporations. In particular, continuing to bar Dreamers, TPS-holders, and undocumented families from access to testing and medical services will have devastating public health consequences."



In New York, Lt. Cmdr. Nevin Yazici demonstrates how to properly fit an N95 respiratory protective device aboard the Seafarers-crewed hospital ship *USNS Comfort* as the vessel prepares to admit patients March 31 in support of the nation's COVID-19 response efforts. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 2nd Class Sara Eshleman)

Seafarers Continue to Perform Vital Mission Even With Worldwide Plague

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white hull of the *Comfort*. "We're here for you. We are fighting for you and we are with you all the way and we always will be. You have the unwavering support of the entire nation."

"I would like to personally thank the men and women embarked aboard *Mercy*," said Modly. "I'm proud of the hard work and agility they demonstrated to get the *Mercy* to Los Angeles (from San Diego) and begin accepting patients almost immediately.

"The white hull and red cross of this ship have been a welcome sight around the world, standing at the forefront of our humanitarian mission," he continued. "And now this great ship is

servicing our own people in this time of need, providing critical surge hospital capacity to the people of Los Angeles. This is just one of the many ways the Department of the Navy is responding to protect the American people in this time of need."

Meanwhile, the U.S. Coast Guard's National Maritime Center posted a series of updates about credentialing and customer service. All 17 of the agency's regional examination centers and three monitoring units are closed to the public until further notice. Various extensions have been given for merchant mariner credentials, medical certificates and STCW endorsements. Drug-testing protocols also have been modified.

DOT Releases National Maritime Strategy

Report Spells Out Vital Need for Strong U.S. Merchant Marine

America's long-awaited national maritime strategy is here – and it supports taking aggressive steps to ensure the ongoing viability of the U.S. Merchant Marine.

The Department of Transportation earlier this year issued the strategic document in the form of a report to Congress titled, "Goals and Objectives for a Stronger Maritime Nation." As noted on its cover page, the report was developed by the DOT and its Maritime Administration "with interagency engagement through the U.S. Committee on the Marine Transportation System."

Among other declarations and recommendations, the report expresses powerful backing of the Jones Act, the U.S. Maritime Security Program (MSP), and cargo preference laws. It calls for boosting domestic shipbuilding, repeatedly cites the critical value of merchant mariners, and categorically states the need to recapitalize the Ready Reserve Force (RRF).

Mandated by legislation from 2014, the

report establishes four "strategic goals" with 39 "objectives" therein. The goals are to "strengthen U.S. Maritime Capabilities Essential to National Security and Economic Prosperity; Ensure the Availability of a U.S. Maritime Workforce that Will Support the Sea Lift Resource Needs of the National Security Strategy; Support Enhancement of U.S. Port Infrastructure and Performance; and, Enable Maritime Industry Innovation in Information, Automation, Safety, Environmental Impact and Other Areas."

The DOT has committed to the following steps within one year: prioritize the 39 objectives for near, medium and long-term capability; develop an implementation plan for the near-term objectives; consider a timeline for addressing the medium and long-term objectives; and, review and report on regulations that impact the competitiveness of the U.S.-flag fleet.

As noted in the report's introduction, America's military sealift capability al-

ways has depended on private-sector crews and vessels.

"Privately owned U.S.-flag ships in the international trades, the U.S. mariners they employ, and the U.S. shipyards and port facilities that support and sustain the ships' operation and maintenance have long been relied upon as primary resources to serve as a naval and military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency," the report asserts. "These ships, mariners, and facilities have been integral and essential to the defense of our Nation."

In that vein, the report later states, "Maritime readiness supports national security and a more resilient economy. DOT strongly supports DOD and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in their missions to protect our citizens and national interests in times of crisis and natural disaster."

Instructively, the agency cites the historic reliability of U.S. mariners – but warns against any further erosion of the shipboard manpower pool.

"The United States maintains a workforce of highly qualified maritime professionals, reflecting a strong tradition of maritime education and training," DOT says. "As large U.S. flag commercial vessels have left the fleet and international credentialing and certification requirements have become more stringent and costly, it is possible that the size of the mariner workforce will decline. Any further decline of the mariner workforce increases the risk of not having a sufficient number of mariners with appropriate experience and credentials to support sustained operations of more than six months by the full U.S. Government surge sealift fleet, U.S. Government non-surge fleet, and U.S.-flag commercial fleet during a wartime emergency."

Later, the report spells out the aforementioned four goals and underlying objectives. That section includes:

Goal 1: Strengthen U.S. Maritime Capabilities Essential to National Security and Economic Prosperity

Objectives for Goal 1:

1.1 Leverage U.S. maritime policies to advance U.S. commercial interests in the global economy.

1.2 Increase the use of U.S.-flagged vessels in domestic energy transportation and international energy markets.

1.3 Develop and expand marine highway service options and facilitate their further integration into the current U.S. surface transportation system through the America's Marine Highway Program, especially where water-based transport is the most efficient, effective and sustainable option.

1.4 Adapt organizational structures and related authorities, roles, and responsibilities to ensure the sustained ability to monitor the global performance of the U.S.-flagged fleet and the third-party organizations that perform delegated inspection and certification functions on the U.S. Government's behalf.

1.5 Ensure effective use of third parties for inspection and certification by strengthening third-party oversight, auditing, and integrated risk management.

1.6 Address the challenges of the Arctic's rapidly changing environment to ensure the safety and security of the U.S. marine transportation system.

1.7 Recapitalize the Ready Reserve Force (RRF) with modern vessels as ships reach the end of their usable lives.

1.8 Improve the capability of U.S.-flag international trading vessels to better align with DOD and DOT sealift requirements through a combination of MSP funding, MSC chartering, enforcement of preference cargo requirements, regulatory reform and policy, and incentives to reduce vessel operating costs.

1.9 Examine new ways to support shipbuilding and repair facilities, and increase U.S. coastwise trade for eligible U.S.-flag vessels.

1.10 Enhance the U.S. shipyard base by fostering support for shipyard modernization and innovation, and promoting use of the Capital Construction Fund (CCF) and Construction Reserve Fund (CRF) programs.

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Plans Administrator Issues Seafarers Money Purchase Pension Plan Notice

As you may be aware, the Seafarers Money Purchase Pension Plan's (SMPPP) last valuation date was December 31, 2019. Since that date, the world has been experiencing a pandemic arising from the spread of COVID-19. A state of national emergency has been declared in the U.S. As a result of the health scare, the financial markets have experienced substantial losses. Unfortunately, the value of your defined contribution account between the valuation date and the disbursement date has been affected.

Under federal law, the Plan's Board of Trustees are required to act in the best interest of *all* Plan participants. This includes those who are now eligible for distributions from the SMPPP and all the other remaining participants in the Plan. Large withdrawals by few participants could have an unintended detrimental

impact on the remaining participants. The Plan must balance the interest of those remaining participants with those who are currently withdrawing their benefits.

In order to mitigate the potential size of the losses to the remaining participants, the Trustees have decided to temporarily withhold 20% from all current benefit payments. The Trustees will review this action in the future with the hope that the immediate financial crisis will be resolved, allowing the Plan to remit the balance in the future.

Of course, this does not impact the mandatory 20% federal tax withholding that will also be deducted.

I hope that you and your family will remain in good health throughout this emergency. – Margaret Bowen, Seafarers Plans Administrator

SIU Regional VP Sends Message to American Steamship Crews

Editor's note: This communication was posted on the SIU website in early March.

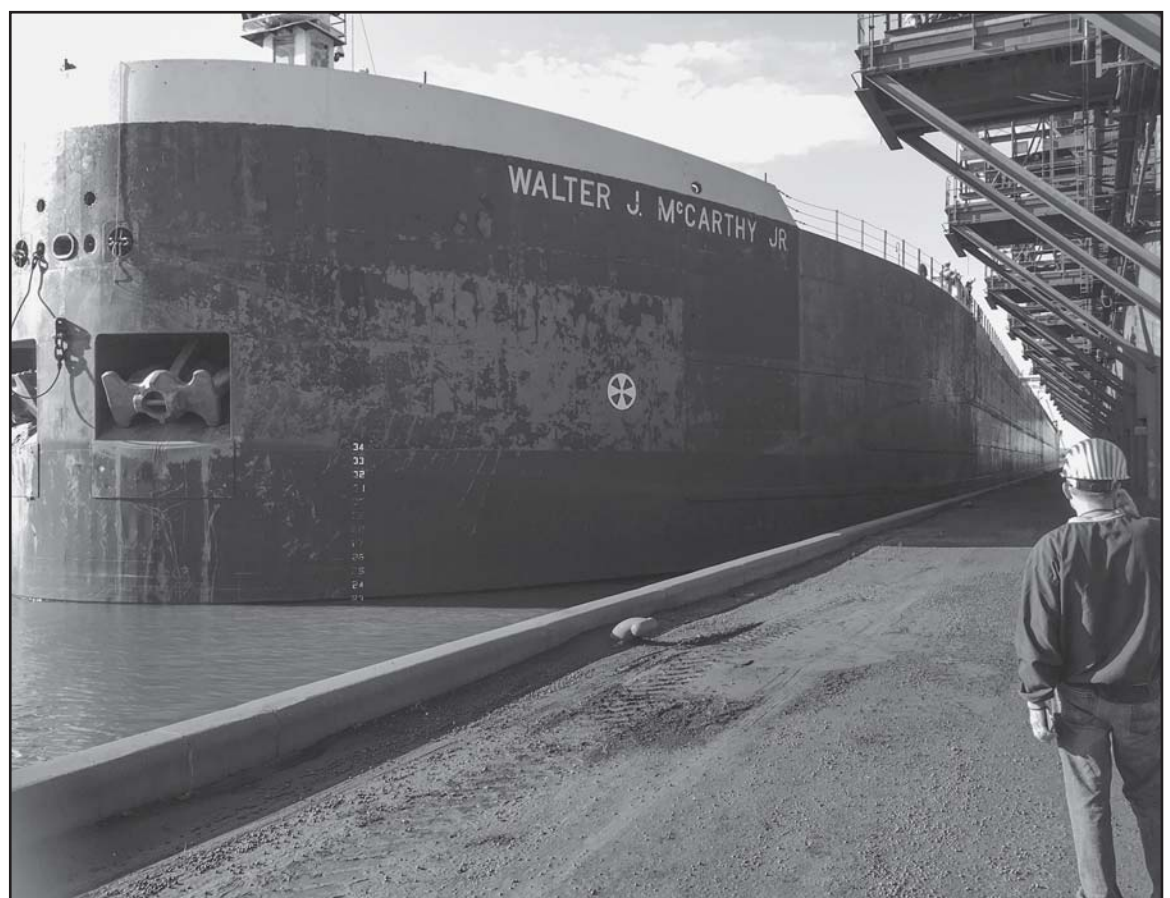
Dear SIU Brothers and Sisters:

On March 6, GATX Corporation formally notified the union that its subsidiary American Steamship Company (ASC) plans to operate all 11 vessels this season. This is what we anticipated, but it wasn't until a few days ago that we received written confirmation.

Further, and as many of you know, GATX is in the process of selling ASC to Rand Logistics, Inc. The transaction is not a certainty and may take many months to finalize, partly because it's subject to review by the U.S. Federal Trade Commission and the U.S. Department of Justice. In any case, the sale will not affect your union contract, which remains in effect until June 15, 2020.

The SIU will work with the new owners to secure a subsequent contract and to protect your jobs. In the meantime, please keep up the great work throughout this sailing season. Your continued professionalism will help everyone involved.

Fraternally,
Tom Orzechowski
SIU VP Great Lakes and Inland Waters



SIU jobs are secure aboard American Steamship Co. vessels including the *Walter J. McCarthy Jr.*, pictured in Superior, Wisconsin.



PITCHING IN FOR COMMON GOOD – Prior to the temporary closures of the hiring halls, Jacksonville, Florida-area Seafarers help keep that facility sanitized. In addition to the work of the nighttime cleaning crew, Port Agent Ashley Nelson and staff “wiped down” the hall at least once per day. As usual, SIU members stepped up to help. Among those lending a hand were QMED Steve Wilson (above, left) and Bosun Robert Bryson (above, center). Also pitching in (photo at right, from left) were QMED Lawrence Brooks, AB John Paul and AB Mehdi Youssef. These photos were taken in mid-March.

At Sea and Ashore with the SIU



WITH CIVMARS ON WEST COAST – SIU Asst. VP Joe Vincenzo (right) and SIU Representative Jesse Ruth (standing) meet with SIU Government Services Division members in late February at the CSU West Coast.



WELCOME ASHORE IN BALTIMORE – Recertified Bosun Brian Fountain (right) picks up his first pension check at the hiring hall, where he is congratulated by Port Agent John Hoskins.



ABOARD CROWLEY TUG – Cook/AB Marilyn Olson is pictured aboard the *Ocean Wave* in Lake Charles, Louisiana.



AT THE JACKSONVILLE HALL – Taking the union oath during the March membership meeting (from left) are QMED Antonio Griffin, OS Darryl Brown and QMED Justin D'Angelo. SIU Port Agent Ashley Nelson is at right. Brother Griffin received his A-seniority book; the other two Seafarers are B-seniority members who received their full books.



WELCOMING NEW MEMBERS – From left, Reefer Engineer Frank Buckman, OS Carlene Mitchell, OS Christian Howe and AB Eric Gardner are pictured aboard the *Joshua Humphreys* in Norfolk, Virginia, shortly after joining the SIU Government Services Division.

At Sea and Ashore with the SIU



BOOKS GALORE IN ALGONAC – GUDE Husam Yahya (left in photo at left) receives his B-book from Port Agent Todd Brdak. In photo at center, ACU Ahmed Said (left) gets his A-book from Safety Director Gerret Jarman. (Said was scheduled to upgrade to chief cook.) In remaining photo at right, GUDE Abdulhamid Salem (left) receives his probationary B-book, while AB Abdo Alasaadi (right) picks up his A-book. They are pictured with Jarman.



ABOARD OVERSEAS LOS ANGELES – Pictured March 1 aboard the OSG vessel in Richmond, California, are (photo at left, back row, from left) SA Jessie Espiritu, ABG Mohammed Haruna, GUDE Ahmed Saleh, AB Joseph Nicodemus, GUDE Salah Alosfur, (front) Chief Cook Keith Hall, Steward/Baker Johnny Sawyer, Recertified Bosun Teodulfo Alanano and SIU Oakland Port Agent Nick Marrone II



AT THE HOUSTON HALL – AB Regina Ewing already was taking the threat of COVID-19 seriously when she stopped by the hall in mid-March.



ABOARD SUNSHINE STATE – Pictured on the Intrepid Personnel and Provisioning vessel are (from left) Recertified Bosun Marc Marcus, ABM Daniel Harris, ABM Randy Shaw and Third Mate Julian Martinez. The masks were for routine work-related reasons, not COVID-19.

EMPHASIZING SAFETY – Labor and management always team up at Watco to promote safe operations. Pictured at the company's marine transfer station in Elizabeth, New Jersey, are (standing, from left) Watco supervisor Andrew Jones, Seafarers Scott Howe, Scott C. Smith, Scott Smith, Thomas Napoli and Watco manager Chris Jackson, and (front, from left) Seafarers Stephen Krupp, Michael Mazzone and Corey Hornig.



Several World War II mariners (front row, in dark jackets) were honored at last year's National Maritime Day ceremony in Washington, D.C. They and their comrades now are eligible for a Congressional Gold Medal. The photo above, taken right after the ceremony, also includes Paul Hall Center apprentices, featured speakers, SIU officials and others. Among those pictured are (back row, from left) SIU VP Contracts George Tricker, Port Agent Victor Nunez, Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel, President Michael Sacco, Gen. Stephen Lyons (USA, commander of the U.S. Transportation Command), Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby, SIU VP Great Lakes Tom Orzechowski and SIU Exec. VP Augie Tellez.

New Law Honors WWII Mariners with Gold Medal

The U.S. Merchant Marine of World War II recently received some long-overdue recognition.

President Donald Trump on March 13 signed into law the Merchant Mariners Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020. The legislation previously passed the House and Senate without objection.

The measure provides for the award of a Congressional gold medal collectively, to the United States Merchant Mariners of World War II, in recognition of their dedicated and vital service. The Congressional Gold Medal is the highest honor bestowed by the U.S. Congress.

In an opinion piece published March 14 in the *New York Post*, Dr. Peter Navarro, assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Trade and Manufacturing Policy, wrote, "Let this Congressional Gold Medal not only celebrate some of the most unsung heroes of World War II; let it also reawaken our interest in promoting U.S.-flagged ships and credentialed merchant seamen and strengthening our shipyards and broader defense industrial base. Such a result would be a truly lasting tribute to those World War II merchant mariners who defended freedom then and a broad salute to our future merchant mariners who will defend us in the tomorrows to come."

As reported earlier in the *Seafarers LOG*, the legislation leading to the act becoming law originally was co-sponsored in the House by U.S. Representatives John Garamendi (D-California), Don Young (R-Alaska) and Susan W. Brooks (R-Indiana) and in the Senate by Senators Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Angus King, Jr. (I-Maine), Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), Maria Cantwell (D-Washington) and Sheldon

Whitehouse (D-Rhode Island).

The medal will be displayed in the American Merchant Marine Museum at the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy in New York. Duplicates then will be struck and made available to the public.

The SIU and the Transportation Institute, alongside a number of other backers, took lead roles in obtaining co-sponsors for both the House and Senate bills. More than 1,200 SIU members lost their lives in wartime service during World War II.

"Throughout the Second World War, our armed forces relied on the U.S. Merchant Marine to ferry supplies, cargo and personnel into both theaters of operation, and they paid a heavy price in service to their country," said Garamendi. "The U.S. Merchant Marine suffered the highest per-capita casualty rate in the U.S. Armed Forces during World War II. An estimated 8,300 mariners lost their lives, and another 12,000 were wounded, to make sure our service members could keep fighting. Yet, these mariners who put their lives on the line were not even given veteran status until 1988."

He added, "I had the opportunity to meet with three World War II Merchant Mariners in my office. These mariners put their lives on the line for this country, braving German and Japanese submarines in their Liberty ships as they delivered critical supplies to our service members in the European and Pacific theaters. Unfortunately, their sacrifice is commonly overlooked. A Congressional Gold Medal would give them the recognition they deserve, and I'm pleased that this bill is poised to be signed into law to give these veterans and their families the honor and respect they are

owed. Thank you to Senator Murkowski for championing this legislation in the Senate and for her partnership."

"Despite their loyalty and patriotic services and commitment to the United States, our World War II Merchant Mariners didn't receive their veteran status until nearly 40 years after the war had ended," Murkowski said. "The merchant mariners provided crucial services during World War II by transporting soldiers, tanks, airplanes, ammunition, fuel and food to aid soldiers on

the front lines. This legislation recognizes the unsung heroes of the World War II conflict, for their loyalty and bravery, as they risked their lives to keep the Allied troops properly equipped. I'm thankful my Senate colleagues recognize the importance of honoring the brave merchant mariners for their pivotal role in our nation's history and their efforts in defense of freedom."

There are approximately 4,000 World War II U.S. Merchant Mariners alive today, according to Murkowski's office.

AMMV Provides Answers To Growing List of 'FAQs' About Mariners' Decoration

Editor's note: The American Merchant Marine Veterans organization developed the following list of frequently asked questions, which answers inquiries about the process for distribution of the recently approved Congressional Gold Medal for WWII Merchant Mariners. It was provided for publication by the American Maritime Partnership.

Q: What does "collective medal" mean?

A: It means that one Gold Medal will be presented collectively to the entire group of WWII U.S. Merchant Mariners (USMM) who are entitled to receive it. This medal will be housed in the Ameri-

can Merchant Marine Museum in Kings Point, New York. The U.S. Mint and the American Merchant Marine Veterans organization (AMMV) will work together to design the final medal. Generally, the medal design process takes about 6-8 months.

Q: Who is eligible to receive the Congressional Gold Medal?

A: Any Merchant Marine Veteran who served Honorably at any time from December 7, 1941 to December 31, 1946. This includes all American merchant mariners in oceangoing service

Continued on next page

SIU Headquarters Gets State-Ordered Change of Address

As previously announced in the *Seafarers LOG*, the union and the Seafarers Plans now have a new ad-

dress despite not having physically relocated their headquarters operations.

As of April 22, and because of Maryland State Government-ordered action, the street name changed from Auth Way to Capital Gateway Drive. The numerical portion of the address, as well as all phone and fax numbers for the building, remain unchanged. The new address thus became:

5201 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, Maryland 20746.

As members and most other stakeholders are aware, the old address, (since 1982, when the SIU relocated from New York) was 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, Maryland 20746.

The union nor Seafarers Plans sought this address change. In fact, both petitioned responsible officials against it, but

to no avail. Other organizations along the same street in Prince George's County also are being forced to comply with the alteration. The street itself already had been named Capital Gateway Drive beyond the Seafarers building, which is next to a subway station.

Mailings from headquarters are being sent to SIU pensioners and other interested parties, alerting them of this change.

Labor Mourns Passing Of BCTGM President Durkee

Bakery, Confectionery, Tobacco Workers and Grain Millers (BCTGM) International President David B. Durkee passed away March 30 following an extended battle with cancer. He was 66 years old.

Durkee was a 47-year member of the union, having started his career in his native Indiana. In announcing his passing, the union's website stated, "There was no fight he wouldn't lead, no adversary he wouldn't confront, if the best interests of the BCTGM were at risk."

Durkee received the Paul Hall Award last year from the Maritime Port Council of Greater New York/New Jersey. He was a member of the AFL-CIO Executive Council and had served on the Maritime Trades Department executive board prior to his becoming BCTGM president.

"David Durkee always stood up for his members," recalled MTD/SIU President Michael Sacco. "He was a quiet, effective leader and will be greatly missed."

AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, "The entire labor movement is saddened by the death of Dave Durkee. We have lost a brother, a friend and a fierce defender of working families. Dave spent his life fighting for workers' rights and advocating for a fair and just society. His dedication to our movement and our country leaves a lasting legacy.... It is a sad day for those of us who had the privilege of knowing Dave. We mourn his passing and will continue to fight like hell for the values he held dear."

United Mine Workers of America International President Cecil E. Roberts stated, "David Durkee was one of my heroes in the labor movement. He fought like a lion on behalf of his members, unafraid to take on giant international corporations with courage, conviction and determination to preserve their jobs, their pensions and their communities. His ability to analyze complex problems and develop innovative solutions was an inspira-



David Durkee (right) is pictured last year with MTD Executive Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Duncan.

tion not just to me, but to all who worked with him."

The BCTGM further described Durkee as "an amazing and sometimes radical union activist but also an incredible husband, father, grandfather, brother and friend. A devoted family man, he always said the fight was about more than the gains we could win

for present union members; the fight was to make a better world for his children and grandchildren. He will be greatly missed."

When he was honored by the port council, Durkee said the late Paul Hall (who served as SIU and MTD President from 1957 to 1980) stood for "strong and principled leadership ... creativity, innovation and breaking new

ground to improve the lives and standard of living of his members and their families ... unflinching courage ... an unyielding commitment to the highest values and standards of trade unionism. He was about labor solidarity and always being there for fellow union members and he never forgot where he came from."

FAQ: Merchant Mariners Of WWII Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020

Continued from Page 8

during the period of armed conflict, December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945, and who meet the following prerequisites:

- Was employed by the War Shipping Administration or Office of Defense Transportation (or their agents) as a merchant seaman documented by the U.S. Coast Guard or the Department of Commerce (Merchant Mariner's Document/Certificate of Service), or as a civil servant employed by the U.S. Army Transport Service (later redesignated U.S. Army Transportation Corps, Water Division) or the Naval Transportation Service, and

- Served satisfactorily as a crew member during the period of armed conflict (December 7, 1941, to August 15, 1945) aboard merchant vessels in oceangoing—foreign, intercoastal, or coastwise—service (per 46 U.S.C. §§10301 and 10501) and further to include near foreign voyages between the United States and Canada, Mexico, or the West Indies via ocean routes, or public vessels in oceangoing service or foreign waters.

Q: Will each eligible veteran receive a Congressional Gold Medal?

A: No. Only one Congressional Gold Medal will be minted and housed at the Kings Point Merchant Marine Museum. Individual veterans desiring a medal must each apply for and purchase replica bronze medals at a cost of about \$54 each. Family members of deceased mariners will be allowed to purchase a replica bronze medal on behalf of their family member.

Q: Are veterans expected to pay for the bronze replica of the CGM?

A: Yes. In accordance with the law, bronze replicas of the U.S. Merchant Marine CGM will be available for sale by mid-2021. These replicas and other CGMs are also available as the law allows for purchase via the U.S. Mint's online catalog. As was previously

indicated, individual veterans desiring a medal may purchase them at a cost of about \$54; family members of deceased mariners can purchase the CGM in their honor for the same price. Costs associated with the purchase of the bronze replica are beyond the scope of the government's responsibility; however, a funding site possibly will be set up for donations so that each veteran will receive their medals free of cost.

Q: Are families of deceased veterans eligible to receive a bronze replica of the CGM?

A: Yes, the closest surviving relative of a deceased veteran may receive a bronze duplicate of the CGM on behalf of the veteran. It is the deceased veteran, however, (not the next of kin) who is the awardee of the CGM under Public Law 115-337

Q: How and when do I apply for this bronze replica?

A: Currently, there is no time frame for when the application process or the medals will be complete. Usually, a veterans' group, along with the government, will establish and implement a registration process. No such process exists yet. The AMMV will publish updated information on its website as it becomes available. Historically, individuals and groups approved for medals have received them approximately 8-10 months after earning them. As examples, the Filipino Scouts WWII were approved for the medal in December 2016 and were awarded their medals in October of 2017. The Chinese American WWII Veterans were approved for their medals in December 2018. They were slated to accept their medals in the fall of 2019; however, the ceremony has been changed to the Spring of 2020 (now cancelled) in Washington, D.C. Medal awards are normally a three-day program hosted by the government and include tours, dinners and ceremonies.

Q: What if I cannot go to D.C. for the ceremony?

A: To ensure that all veterans receive their medals, the plan is for several regional ceremonies to be conducted across the country. At this point, 12 regional ceremonies (covering almost every section of the nation) are in the works. Details will be made available as soon as possible.

Q: What kind of information is required to qualify for the CGM?

A: The veteran's military service can be verified by the following documentation:

- Submission of Honorable Discharge or Separation Papers (DD-214)
- Other forms of verification can be used, but these will not be made public until they are received from Congress.

All documents must be scanned and uploaded. Veterans/family members should not mail in anything or send any original documents. Those who do not own or have access to scanners should visit any of the following sources to scan documents (once it is safe): university or college library; public library; retail outlets such as Kinko's/FedEx, UPS Stores, Office Depot or Office Max; and neighbors or family members.

Q: How do I get my relative's DD-214?

A: Three options are available through which family members may obtain their relatives' DD-214:

Option 1 – The easiest way is to contact your congressman. For those who don't know who their congressperson is, visit www.house.gov/representatives/find-your-representative. Congressmen have access to all records and can get them more easily. Normally, congressmen are very accommodating in this regard. They may present medals directly to veterans or family members. Should this be the case, it's a great idea to take photos or invite local media to attend the ceremony.

Option 2 – For those who do not wish to go through their congressperson, DD-214s may be obtained through the mail. For those choosing this option, visit www.usmm.org/contact.html#contact2. This site contains all information required to obtain the needed form.

Option 3 – Go to the U.S. Coast Guard website at www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/Assistant-Commandant-for-Prevention-Policy-CG-5P/National-Maritime-Center-NMC/record_request. This site contains a wealth information on mariner records and how to obtain them.

Q: Where can I direct additional questions?

A: Contact the AMMV's national headquarters:
P.O. Box 2024
Darien, CT 06820-2024
Phone: (475) 470-9200
Email: ammermarvets@gmail.com

SIU President Issues Pre-Balloting Report

May 4, 2020

Pursuant to Article X, section 1(e) of our Constitution, I am submitting my Pre-Balloting Report. As everyone is aware, the existence of the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in the adoption of procedural changes by most organizations and businesses around the world. The SIU Executive Board, in an effort to protect the health and safety of the membership and staff, has suspended in-person membership meetings until it is deemed safe to resume them. My pre-balloting report, by constitution and practice, is generally read at the regular May membership meetings; however, at this time it appears unlikely that we will be able to hold in-person meetings in May. We will endeavor to get the information contained in my report to the membership by all means reasonably possible. The following is my report.

The balloting for our General Election of Officers for the term 2021-2024 will commence on November 1, 2020 and continue through December 31, 2020. The election will be conducted under the provisions of our Constitution, as amended and effective March 15, 2013, and such other voting procedures as our Secretary-Treasurer may direct.

I have, in consultation with our Executive Board and Port Representatives, made a careful appraisal of the needs of this union, its membership and its currently existing constitutional ports. We have carefully considered the changes that have taken place in the maritime industry over the last few years, with a view toward meeting the ever-changing demands.

It is my recommendation, in accordance with our Constitution, that the following offices be placed on the ballot in the 2020 General Election of Officers for the term 2021-2024:

- 1 President
- 1 Executive Vice President
- 1 Secretary-Treasurer
- 1 Vice President in Charge of Contracts and Contract Enforcement
- 1 Vice President in Charge of the Atlantic Coast

- 1 Vice President in Charge of the Gulf Coast
- 1 Vice President in Charge of the West Coast
- 1 Vice President in Charge of the Southern Region, Great Lakes, and Inland Waters
- 1 Vice President in Charge of Government Services and Fishing Industries
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of Contracts and Contract Enforcement
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of the Atlantic Coast
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of the Gulf Coast
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of the West Coast
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of the Southern Region, Great Lakes and Inland Waters
- 1 Assistant Vice President in Charge of Government Services and Fishing Industries
- 10 Port Agents

There shall be one (1) Port Agent in each of the ten (10) constitutional ports; namely: New Jersey, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston, Algonac, Oakland, St. Louis and Piney Point.

In accordance with the above-mentioned Article X, Section 1(e) of our Constitution, I am required to recommend a bank, a bonded warehouse, regular office thereof, or any similar depository, to which the ballots are to be mailed, no later than the first regular meeting in October of this year. I will make such a recommendation to the membership before such deadline.

As provided for in Article XIII, Section 1, nominations open July 15, 2020 and close August 15, 2020.

The foregoing constitutes your President's Pre-Balloting Report and, subject to my further recommendation as to the depository to be made hereafter, I recommend its adoption.

Fraternally submitted,
Michael Sacco
President

Historian Recalls Plight Of Mariners on High Seas During World War II

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of the German Reich. We are not yielding and we do not propose to yield."

There were other incidents involving American ships prior to Pearl Harbor: the bombing of the *Steel Seafarer* in the Gulf of Suez; the sinking of the freighter *Lehigh*; the mysterious disappearance of the tanker *Astral*, and the sinking of the freighter *Sagahodac* only four days before the attack upon Honolulu.

But it was in January 1942 that the merchant marine felt the full fury of the war at sea. And then, with a suddenness that found us totally unprepared, the U-boats struck – not in foreign waters nor on the convoy routes to Europe, but along the shores of our own Atlantic Coast.

One of the first ships to feel this Nazi thrust in the western Atlantic was the SIU-manned *City of Atlanta*.

U-Boat Lane

There was a chill breeze and a long, glassy swell on the sea, as the SIU-manned *Seatrain Texas* came up the Carolina coast at full speed in the morning of January 19, 1942.

Captain Albert Dalzell was on the bridge and every officer and unlicensed man aboard was on the alert, for Sparks had been receiving messages of ships being attacked by submarines.

During the night there had been flashes of gunfire on the horizon and, though they supposed it was practice fire by the Navy or Coast Guard, they were taking no chances. The ship was holding as close to the shore as safe navigation would permit.

The officer of the watch had just taken a bearing on Wimble Shoals buoy, when a call came from the lookout that there was wreckage on the water ahead.

Captain Dalzell got his glasses and swept the sea in the direction toward which the lookout had pointed. There were small black specks bobbing on the long swells and, as he focused more clearly on the area, he saw a man's hand wave from one of the bits of flotsam.

It waved again, weakly. All he could see was the hand, for the man's head and shoulders were too close to the water.

Turning to the Mate, the Skipper ordered a boat prepared for lowering. The engine room telegraph jingled as speed was decreased, and the freighter ran swiftly on the scattered wreckage now becoming more visible.

They could see pieces of boards and shattered odds and ends of ship's fittings strewn for a mile here and there across the undulating water, but careful scrutiny through the glasses revealed only five bodies amid the debris. One man was holding onto the frame of a wheelhouse door.

As the *Seatrain Texas* came to a stop, the lifeboat was put quickly over the side in the well-coordinated movements of a veteran crew and was soon pulling through the water-soaked wreckage.

The boat's crew worked fast, for Captain Dalzell couldn't endanger his vessel and her crew a minute longer than was necessary. For all they knew, a submarine was watching every movement they made.

To Be Continued

Puerto Rico Rebuilds During Pandemic

While the nation adjusts to new precautions stemming from the continuing outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19), unions and their members are still hard at work helping the affected areas of Puerto Rico rebuild after a series of devastating earthquakes in January.

Now, the union-led relief efforts are facing the added challenge of working to provide aid during this COVID-19 pandemic.

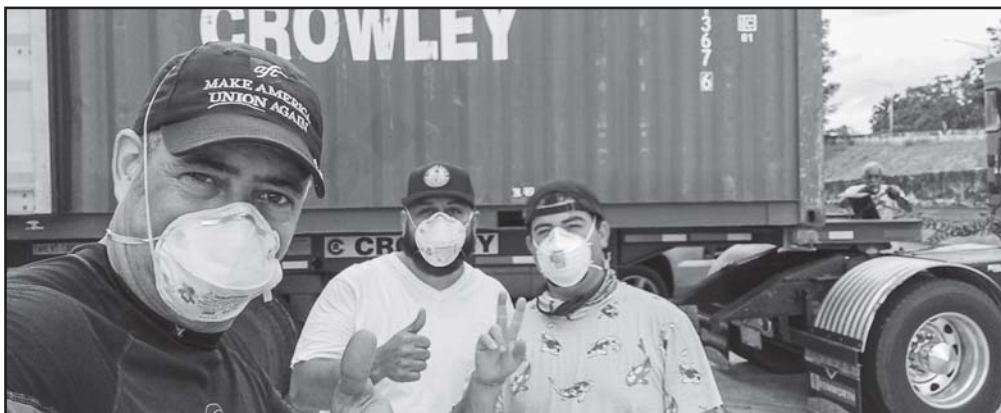
SIU Port Agent Amancio Crespo said, "Our situation in Puerto Rico, pertaining to COVID-19, is no different than the

mainland. The Puerto Rican government has established a curfew, from 7 p.m. till 5 a.m., with no exceptions unless one works in the healthcare, transportation, or security industries."

Crespo continued, "As far our local membership, so far no one has informed me that they are sick with the virus, thank God. I'm in contact with the membership that's returning to their respective jobs, assisting them with documents, clinicals and whatever else is required to return to work, and none of them have contracted the virus."

He concluded, "In other words, the work continues."

SIU Port Agent Amancio Crespo (left) pauses from unloading a cargo container of relief supplies to pose for a picture with other Seafarers.



Overseas Shipholding Group Completes ATC Purchase

Company Also Announces Plans to Build ATB

Seafarers-contracted Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. (OSG) recently announced that its subsidiaries have completed the purchase of three SIU-crewed, U.S.-flagged tankers – the *Alaskan Explorer*, *Alaskan Legend*, and *Alaskan Navigator* – from BP Oil Shipping Company USA and BP AMI Leasing Inc.

OSG has also entered into a bareboat charter with BP for a fourth vessel, the *Alaskan Frontier*, as well as completing the acquisition of Alaska Tanker Company LLC (ATC), which still serves as

the operator of the vessels.

As previously reported, all SIU jobs remain secure aboard the ships.

The vessels purchased will continue to be operated by ATC under time charters with BP Exploration (Alaska), Inc., with firm charter periods lasting until 2022, 2025, and 2026. Each charter also provides for five one-year extension options.

OSG President and CEO Sam Norton stated, "The swift completion of this series of transactions within 80 days of

reaching definitive agreements is a testimony to both the commitment of and co-operation among OSG and ATC personnel. All involved worked extremely hard to bring about the successful outcome that we are announcing today, an outcome that once again reflects well on both organizations' focus on excellence in execution of all aspects of work undertaken. I am gratified to be part of such a dedicated team of professionals and salute their achievement."

Norton continued, "We have long viewed consolidation among owners of Jones Act tankers as an opportunity for OSG to build on its industry-leading franchise in serving the distribution needs of domestic oil producers and refiners. The addition of ATC and its operated vessels to OSG's platform is a notable achievement in this context, providing the opportunity for substantial additional revenue

in the years to come and cementing a long-standing presence in the highly demanding and important Alaskan crude oil trade."

Anil Mathur, ATC's outgoing president and CEO, and special advisor to OSG, stated, "These are indeed exciting times for ATC. Being part of the OSG family provides new additional opportunities for ATC personnel. I am also pleased that we are retaining the shipboard and the shore support personnel directly responsible for the operations integrity of the tankers. This best provides for continuity of ATC's strong safety and environmental performance."

Meanwhile, OSG in late March announced that it has finalized plans to build an articulated tug-barge (ATB) at Gunderson Marine in Portland, Oregon. The new tonnage is slated for delivery later this year.

New Maritime Strategy Supports Ensuring Viability Of Strong Merchant Marine

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Goal 2: Ensure the Availability of a U.S. Maritime Workforce that Will Support the Sealift Resource Needs of the National Security Strategy

Objectives for Goal 2:

2.1 Attract and equip mariners and other maritime workers with skills needed to support the Nation's sealift and economic needs.

2.2 Develop an accurate roster of sealift-qualified mariner volunteers.

2.3 Foster innovation in maritime education and training....

2.9 Support the training and education of unlicensed mariners (ratings) using domestic Centers of Maritime Excellence.

2.10 Incentivize the qualification of steam engineers to assure an adequate pool to support full RFF activation until full RFF recapitalization is achieved.

2.11 Engage with community colleges, K-12 schools, and non-SMA training institutions to promote the development of future mariners and other skilled maritime workers.

2.12 Work with interagency partners to improve credentialing processes for mariners, shipyard workers, port workers, and transitioning veterans.

Before the report was finalized, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a related document explaining the background of the maritime policy mandate (and offering candid looks at why the report was delayed). In the course of its own reporting, the GAO underscored the importance of the Jones Act, pointing out that one purpose of the nation's freight cabotage law "is to provide the nation with a strong domestic maritime industry that can serve as a naval or military auxiliary in time of war or national emergency." Modifying or repealing the law would cripple the industry, according to the Jones Act supporters, and while the GAO didn't phrase the point as strongly, it did acknowledge that such steps would "affect the reliability of the industry and have a negative effect on the U.S.-flag maritime industry and national security."

Later, the GAO indirectly quoted Defense officials who cited the need for more U.S.-flag tankers, partly because "access to allied foreign-flag petroleum tankers is increasingly uncertain in the current geo-political environment."

Dispatchers' Report for Deep Sea

"Total Registered" and "Total Shipped" data is cumulative from March 3-April 2. "Registered on the Beach" data is as of April 3.

Port	Total Registered			Total Shipped			Trip Reliefs	Registered on Beach		
	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C	All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C		All Groups A	All Groups B	All Groups C
Deck Department										
Algonac	17	4	3	45	12	2	8	22	12	3
Anchorage	2	1	0	1	0	1	1	4	5	2
Baltimore	4	2	1	3	0	0	1	7	2	1
Fort Lauderdale	20	4	1	11	5	3	8	36	16	4
Guam	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	4	1	1
Harvey	7	7	0	5	1	0	3	23	11	3
Honolulu	5	2	1	5	1	1	2	15	3	0
Houston	33	25	5	28	15	3	19	81	35	7
Jacksonville	35	26	1	16	17	2	12	58	45	5
Jersey City	29	12	2	19	3	3	11	66	23	6
Joliet	1	3	1	3	3	0	0	3	7	0
Mobile	3	0	3	7	1	0	2	12	4	7
Norfolk	18	10	5	15	5	1	6	36	20	8
Oakland	13	3	1	2	2	2	6	31	7	2
Philadelphia	1	3	0	1	3	1	0	5	2	2
Piney Point	5	2	1	2	3	0	2	5	4	2
Puerto Rico	4	5	0	4	1	0	0	11	5	1
Tacoma	25	6	5	12	4	2	10	44	8	10
St. Louis	2	0	1	2	0	2	1	4	0	1
Wilmington	23	14	2	10	7	1	4	47	28	9
TOTALS	248	130	34	191	84	24	97	514	238	74
Engine Department										
Algonac	0	1	0	10	1	0	0	2	1	2
Anchorage	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Baltimore	3	2	1	1	2	0	1	4	2	1
Fort Lauderdale	7	8	1	5	7	0	6	17	17	3
Guam	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	1	0
Harvey	2	4	1	2	0	0	0	5	6	1
Honolulu	8	0	0	4	1	0	3	11	1	3
Houston	11	7	2	8	3	3	8	25	20	3
Jacksonville	12	21	1	10	6	1	3	27	25	2
Jersey City	8	5	2	9	3	0	3	23	9	3
Joliet	2	1	2	4	2	0	0	2	0	2
Mobile	3	3	0	1	1	0	0	4	6	0
Norfolk	11	15	2	9	10	2	5	23	24	6
Oakland	3	6	2	5	3	0	1	8	12	4
Philadelphia	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	3	4	0
Piney Point	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	2	5	0
Puerto Rico	1	1	0	3	2	0	1	5	3	0
Tacoma	14	2	2	9	1	0	5	21	13	5
St. Louis	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	2	2	0
Wilmington	5	14	0	9	7	0	6	22	18	2
TOTALS	94	97	17	92	51	7	42	208	169	38
Steward Department										
Algonac	5	2	1	11	1	1	1	4	2	0
Anchorage	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Baltimore	0	2	0	0	3	0	0	1	1	0
Fort Lauderdale	5	5	0	4	3	0	5	12	7	3
Guam	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	2	0
Harvey	5	2	0	2	0	0	0	7	3	0
Honolulu	6	1	0	7	1	0	2	17	2	1
Houston	25	6	0	10	0	0	1	42	13	2
Jacksonville	13	6	3	7	3	1	5	26	17	4
Jersey City	6	2	1	6	2	0	4	13	5	1
Joliet	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mobile	1	0	0	1	1	0	1	5	4	0
Norfolk	13	10	3	6	3	2	3	25	18	6
Oakland	9	4	1	6	2	0	3	21	7	0
Philadelphia	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0
Piney Point	2	4	0	1	3	0	1	4	5	0
Puerto Rico	2	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	2	0
Tacoma	11	2	2	6	0	0	2	19	4	4
St. Louis	1	2	0	1	1	0	0	2	1	0
Wilmington	21	7	1	14	5	0	9	32	13	1
TOTALS	128	57	12	86	31	4	37	240	107	22
Entry Department										
Algonac	0	10	6	0	17	11	5	1	14	16
Anchorage	0	2	3	0	2	2	2	0	0	2
Baltimore	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
Fort Lauderdale	1	7	7	0	4	3	2	1	8	8
Guam	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Harvey	0	4	2	0	3	0	0	1	2	3
Honolulu	1	2	3	1	1	1	0	0	8	7
Houston	7	10	8	1	7	0	2	10	23	14
Jacksonville	2	15	16	0	14	5	6	2	46	47
Jersey City	2	13	5	3	4	3	2	2	21	7
Joliet	0	0	4	0	0	5	0	0	0	1
Mobile	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	1
Norfolk	0	11	19	0	7	9	2	1	23	40
Oakland	1	6	5	1	5	3	4	2	25	15
Philadelphia	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	0
Piney Point	0	0	9	0	0	5	8	0	0	9
Puerto Rico	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
Tacoma	2	5	5	2	1	1	1	6	22	11
St. Louis	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Wilmington	2	18	5	1	15	2	3	2	25	28
TOTALS	18	106	99	9	80	50	37	31	224	215
GRAND TOTAL:	488	390	162	378	246	85	213	993	738	349

ATTENTION

SEAFARERS

Another New Ship



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 (253) 272-7774

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 (310) 549-4000

Inquiring Seafarer

This month's question was answered March 26 by upgraders at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland.

Question: What are some of your thoughts about the pandemic?



Lareesa Warren
 Chief Cook

Honestly, being with the union, I think we lucked out being on this side, since we're able to still have employment, whereas a lot of people with land jobs are having more of a struggle than we are. I feel a lot safer here at Piney Point than I would at home.



Esperanza Crespo
 Chief Cook

It's dangerous. The whole world is suffering. Things are going fine at the school. We're taking care of everything – washing our hands, maintaining distance from each other, things like that. I think it's going to last a few more months, maybe even the whole year.



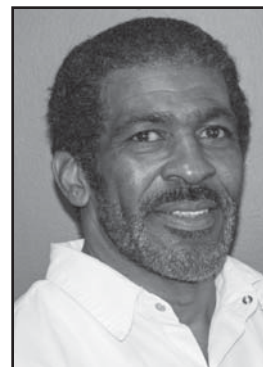
Robert Hunter
 Chief Cook

So far, since I've been at the school, I feel they are taking proper precautions to make sure we are safe. This is something to take seriously, but we as a country should have had things in place to prevent it from happening. I agree with slowly winding down, not taking in more upgraders. The union has taken the measures they need to take to make sure we're safe.



Myles Otis
 Chief Cook

I'm glad that we made it to the school right before this started. A lot of people left, but I'm glad we were able to stay to complete our program. The pandemic is definitely crazy – I have to check on family and friends every day. Being a chief cook, I've been staying clean as normal. That's routine to me, but some people aren't as sanitary. I'm still in good spirits. All I can do is pray for anybody who has it.



Ronald Williams
 Chief Cook

It wasn't as serious in the beginning, but now the seriousness is disturbing. I believe we'll get through it. The school is going great, and in fact, this is one of the places I prefer to be now that the pandemic is going on. There are no active cases here, and the chances of running across a case are very slim. I like my chances here more so than in any city.



Seth Alonzo
 Chief Cook

I know everyone is worried, but I'm trying to keep focused and stay open-minded and not go crazy. I'm being patient, taking it one step at a time. It's not too busy at school, since there are mainly just chief cooks and some staff here. I'd probably say half a year from now, roughly, we'll be through it.

Pic From The Past

The *Hoosier Mariner*, pictured in 1953, carried an SIU crew and initially was operated by Isthmian. According to the U.S. Maritime Administration, the vessel was one of the final ships designed by the U.S. Maritime Commission. "The Mariner-class (ships) did not go into production until after the U.S. government had reorganized the agency as the Maritime Administration under the Department of Commerce," MARAD notes. The ships were "successors to the war-era Victory ships and standard 'C' types." The agency "built 29 Mariners for six of the larger U.S. shipping companies between 1952 and 1955." Mariner-class ships were 564 feet long, had a capacity of 14,000 deadweight tons, and an operational speed of 20 knots.



If anyone has a vintage union-related photograph he or she would like to share with other Seafarers LOG readers, please send it to the Seafarers LOG, 5201 Auth Way, Camp Springs, MD 20746. Photographs will be returned, if so requested. High-resolution digital images may be sent to webmaster@seafarers.org

Welcome Ashore

Each month, the Seafarers LOG pays tribute to the SIU members who have devoted their working lives to sailing aboard U.S.-flag vessels on the deep seas, inland waterways or Great Lakes. Listed below are brief biographical sketches of those members who recently retired from the union. The brothers and sisters of the SIU thank those members for a job well done and wish them happiness and good health in the days ahead.



DEEP SEA

JOEMAR ABAGAT

Brother Joemar Abagat, 65, joined the Seafarers International Union in 1993, initially sailing on the *Producer*. He was a deck department member and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center in 1996. Brother Abagat most recently sailed on the *Liberty*. He makes his home in San Diego.



ROBERTA BLUM

Sister Roberta Blum, 65, signed on with the SIU in 1980 when she sailed aboard the *Voyager*. She was a member of the steward department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Sister Blum's final vessel was the *Eugene Obregon*. She makes her home in New Rochelle, New York.

CHRISTOPHER BROERMAN

Brother Christopher Broerman, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1979, initially shipping on the *Aleutian Developer*. A deck department member, he upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center in 1988. Brother Broerman last sailed on the *Tacoma* in 2000. He resides in Bullhead City, Arizona.

JAMES BURNS

Brother James Burns, 65, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1979 when he sailed aboard the *Penny*. He worked in the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on several occasions. Brother Burns last shipped on the *Maersk Missouri*. He calls Newbury Port, Massachusetts, home.

LEOPOLDO CALDERON

Brother Leopoldo Calderon, 66, signed on with the Seafarers in 1999, when he sailed on the *Silas Bent*. He was a steward department member and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Calderon most recently sailed aboard the *Maersk Denver*. He resides in Richmond, Texas.



FRANK CAMPOBASSO

Brother Frank Campobasso, 67, started shipping with the union in 1973, initially sailing on the *Brooklyn*. He upgraded on multiple occasions at the Paul Hall Center and sailed in the deck department. Brother Campobasso's final vessel was the *Maersk Idaho*. He lives in Tuckerton, New Jersey.

BRIAN FOUNTAIN

Brother Brian Fountain, 67, joined the union in 1980. He was a member of the deck department and first sailed aboard the *Cantigny*. Brother Fountain upgraded often at the Piney

Point school. He most recently shipped on the *Florida* and settled in Baltimore.

DONALD GILBERT

Brother Donald Gilbert, 65, donned the SIU colors in 1977 when he sailed aboard the *Galveston*. A deck department member, he upgraded at the Paul Hall Center in 1980. Brother Gilbert's final vessel was the *Overseas New Orleans*. He makes his home in Huntsville, Alabama.

CRESCENCIO GONZALEZ

Brother Crescencio Gonzalez, 66, signed on with the union in 2005, first sailing on the *Sirius*. He upgraded on multiple occasions at the union-affiliated Piney Point school and was an engine department member. Brother Gonzalez's last ship was the *SBX*. He resides in Miami.



TINO GUILTY

Brother Tino Guity, 69, joined the union in 2005, initially sailing aboard the *Chemical Pioneer*. He worked in both the deck and engine departments and most recently sailed aboard the *Maersk Kinloss*. Brother Guity lives in Bronx, New York.



CHARLES HORTON

Brother Charles Horton, 65, began shipping with the union in 2006 when he sailed aboard the *Pride of Aloha*. He worked in the engine department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Horton last shipped on the *SBX*. He resides in Mount Vernon, Missouri.

JIMMIE JOSEPH

Brother Jimmie Joseph, 65, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 2002, first sailing on the *Chemical Explorer*. He sailed in the deck department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Joseph's last vessel was the *Green Ridge*. He settled in Kennard, Texas.

ROBERT MENSCHING

Brother Robert Mensching, 60, signed on with the SIU in 1988. A steward department member, he initially sailed aboard the *Independence*. Brother Mensching upgraded at the Piney Point school on several occasions. He most recently shipped aboard the *American Liberty*. He makes his home in Jacksonville, Florida.



WILLIAM MOE

Brother William Moe, 65, joined the union in 1982, first sailing aboard the *Independence*. He shipped in the steward department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on several occasions. Brother Moe most recently sailed aboard the *Maunalei* and settled in Henderson, Nevada.



ROBERT MORRISON

Brother Robert Morrison, 65, donned the SIU colors in 2005, initially shipping on the *USNS Chesapeake*. A deck department member, he upgraded often at the Piney Point school. Brother Morrison last sailed aboard the *Yorktown Express*. He calls Grand Island, Florida, home.

ARTIS PILGRIM

Brother Artis Pilgrim, 57, started his career with the Seafarers in 1999 when he sailed on the *Robert E. Lee*. He was a steward department member and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Pilgrim's final vessel was the *Liberty Glory*. He lives in Sugarland, Texas.



ROBERT SMITH

Brother Robert Smith, 65, joined the SIU in 1977, initially sailing aboard the *Long Lines*. He upgraded at the Piney Point school in 1979 and shipped in the deck department. Brother Smith last sailed on the *Virgo* and makes his home in West Elizabeth, Pennsylvania.

BENNIE SPENCER

Brother Bennie Spencer, 61, signed on with the union in 1978 when he shipped on the *Cantigny*. The deck department member upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Spencer most recently sailed aboard the *Gopher State*. He lives in Chesapeake, Virginia.

RUSTY STEWART

Brother Rusty Stewart, 65, began his career with the SIU in 1972. An engine department member, he upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Stewart's first vessel was the *Merrimac*; his last, the *Liberty*. He calls Poulsbo, Washington, home.



DELSRAEL WILLIAMS

Brother Delsrael Williams, 48, began sailing with the union in 1998, initially working on the *Bella-trix*. He shipped in the deck department and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Williams last sailed on the *Overseas Texas City*. He resides in Hammond, Louisiana.

MICHAEL ZOABI

Brother Michael Zoabi, 65, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1987. He was a steward department member and first sailed aboard the *Independence*. Brother Zoabi upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. He last sailed on the *SBX* and settled in Honolulu.



GREAT LAKES

CHARLES ALLEN

Brother Charles Allen, 66, joined the union in 1975, when he shipped on the *Sam Laud*. The deck department member upgraded his skills at the Piney Point school on several occasions. Brother Allen concluded his career aboard the *Padre Island* and resides in Kingston, Washington.



DENNIS FITZPATRICK

Brother Dennis Fitzpatrick, 64, donned the SIU colors in 1974, initially sailing aboard the *J.A. King*. He was a member of the deck department and upgraded on several occasions at the Piney Point school. Brother Fitzpatrick most recently shipped on the *American Mariner* and settled in Alpena, Michigan.



INLAND

DONALD BOND

Brother Donald Bond, 59, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1990. He was first employed with McAllister Towing of Virginia and primarily sailed in the engine department. Brother Bond upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. He last worked for Penn Maritime and lives in Saucier, Mississippi.



RILEY BUSH

Brother Riley Bush, 62, joined the union in 1983. He first worked for HVIDE Marine and primarily sailed in the engine department. Brother Bush most recently shipped aboard the *Zeus*. He calls Jasper, Texas, home.



HOWARD COOK

Brother Howard Cook, 60, signed on with the SIU in 2000, working with

G&H Towing. Sailing in the engine department, he remained with the same company for the duration of his career. Brother Cook makes his home in La Marque, Texas.

LUIS GOMEZ

Brother Luis Gomez, 66, began sailing with the SIU in 1976. He was first employed by Crowley Puerto Rico and shipped as a member of the deck department. Brother Gomez most recently sailed with Puerto Rico Towing and Barge. He resides in Puerto Rico.

BILLY HARROFF

Brother Billy Harroff, 66, joined the SIU in 1978, first working for G&H Towing. He upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions and shipped in the engine department. Brother Harroff last sailed aboard the *William Button* in 1991. He settled in Mesquite, Texas.

RICHARD HEATH

Brother Richard Heath, 63, signed on with the union in 1981. A deck department member, he upgraded at the Piney Point school in 1996. Brother Heath was employed by Moran Towing of Texas for the duration of his career. He resides in Kerens, Texas.



ROBERT KIEFFER

Brother Robert Kieffer, 62, donned the SIU colors in 1980, initially sailing aboard the *Sugar Island*. An engine department member, he upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Kieffer's final vessel was the *Padre Island*. He settled in Reno, Nevada.



LAVERN MCDOWELL

Brother Lavern McDowell, 66, joined the Seafarers in 1999 when he sailed aboard the *Alaska*. He was a member of the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school in 2001. Brother McDowell last shipped with Foss Maritime. He makes his home in Mobile, Alabama.



NMU

CYNTHIA SASSE

Sister Cynthia Sasse, 69, signed on with the union in 2001. She sailed with the NMU prior to the SIU/NMU merger. Sister Sasse sailed in the steward department and last shipped aboard the *Liberator*. She is a Houston resident.

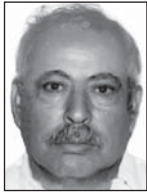
Final Departures



DEEP SEA

NASAR ALFAQIH

Pensioner Nasar Alfaqih, 86, died February 23. He signed on with the SIU in 1969 and first shipped on the *Frank Denton*. Brother Alfaqih was a member of the steward department. He concluded his career on the *Express* and became a pensioner in 1999. Brother Alfaqih resided in Hamtramck, Michigan.



PABLO ALVAREZ

Pensioner Pablo Alvarez, 71, passed away February 29. He joined the SIU in 1989. A steward department member, Brother Alvarez first sailed aboard the *Independence*. He last shipped on the *Harriette* and went on pension in 2010. Brother Alvarez was a Houston resident.



SILVERIO ARANA

Pensioner Silverio Arana, 89, died February 1. He began sailing with the union in 1985 when he shipped on the *USNS Algol*. Brother Arana was a member of the steward department. He concluded his career on the *Robert E. Lee* and retired in 2001. Brother Arana lived in Houston.



MICHAEL BAUGHMAN

Pensioner Michael Baughman, 70, passed away March 3. He began his career with the SIU in 1999, initially sailing aboard the *Cape Jacob*. Brother Baughman was an engine department member, and became a pensioner in 2014. He made his home in Grafton, West Virginia.



LAVERNE BERASIS

Pensioner Laverne Berasis, 80, died March 27. She joined the union in 1998, and her first vessel was the *Independence*. Sister Berasis was a steward department member and last shipped on the *USNS Charlton*. She began collecting her pension in 2011 and settled in Honolulu.

DANIEL BOONE

Pensioner Daniel Boone, 93, passed away March 12. He donned the SIU colors in 1959, initially working for Isco Inc.



Brother Boone was a steward department member and last sailed on the *Robert E. Lee*. He retired in 1991 and made his home in New Orleans.

RAMON BORRERO

Pensioner Ramon Borrero, 53, died March 23. He joined the Seafarers in 1987 when he sailed on the *Libra*. An engine department member, Brother Borrero concluded his career on the *Isla Bella*. He began collecting his pension in 2017 and resided in Puerto Rico.

JIMMIE BROWN

Pensioner Jimmie Brown, 80, passed away March 29. He embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1958 when he sailed with Ocean Cargo Ships Inc. An engine department member, Brother Brown last worked on the *Consumer*. He retired in 2011 and settled in Freeport, Florida.

NORMAN DUBOIS

Pensioner Norman Dubois, 95, died March 29. He started sailing with the SIU in 1953. Brother Dubois sailed in the deck department and concluded his career aboard the *Sam Houston*. He became a pensioner in 1986 and resided in Nazareth, Pennsylvania.



WILLIAM FEAZEL

Pensioner William Feazel, 74, passed away March 6. He signed on with the SIU in 2000 when he sailed aboard the *USNS Effective*. Brother Feazel worked in the engine department. He last sailed aboard the *Paul Buck* and went on pension in 2009. Brother Feazel lived in Virginia Beach, Virginia.



RICHARD HILBERT

Pensioner Richard Hilbert, 74, died March 12. He joined the Seafarers in 1990, first sailing on the *Cape Clear*. Brother Hilbert was a member of the deck department. He last shipped on the *Honor*, and began collecting his pension in 2010. Brother Hilbert was a resident of St. Petersburg, Florida.



OGDEN LAFAYE

Pensioner Ogden Lafaye, 79, passed away February 8. He began his career with the union



in 1981, initially sailing aboard the *Liberator*. Brother Lafaye shipped in the engine department. He last sailed on the *Motivator* before going on pension in 2009. Brother Lafaye called Roseburg, Virginia, home.

JULIO LOBO

Brother Julio Lobo, 65, has passed away. He joined the SIU in 2001 and sailed in the steward department. Brother Lobo's first vessel was the *Energy Enterprise*; his last, the *Maersk Saratoga*. He resided in New Bedford, Massachusetts.

WILLIE MADISON

Pensioner Willie Madison, 74, died February 22. He started sailing with the SIU in 1967, initially shipping on the *Mayaguez*. Brother Madison sailed in the steward department and concluded his career on the *Lightning*. He retired in 2015 and lived in Jacksonville, Florida.

EFRAIN VELAZQUEZ

Pensioner Efrain Velazquez, 83, passed away March 9. He joined the union in 1969 when he sailed aboard the *Ames Victory*. Brother Velazquez worked in both the steward and engine departments. He went on pension in 2001 after sailing on his final vessel, the *Mayaguez*. Brother Velazquez made his home in Deltona, Florida.



GREAT LAKES

MARVIN LARSON

Pensioner Marvin Larson, 82, passed away March 7. He signed on with the Seafarers in 1991, initially sailing on the *American Republic*. Brother Larson was a steward department member and concluded his career on the *Buffalo*. He went on pension in 2002 and called Alpena, Michigan, home.



INLAND

FELIX AGUILAR

Pensioner Felix Aguilar, 81, died February 29. He donned the SIU colors in 1978 when he worked for Crowley Puerto Rico. Brother Aguilar was a member of the deck department and continued to work for the same



company for the duration of his career. He retired in 2001 and lived in Puerto Rico.

LARRY JAMIESON

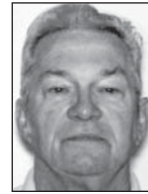
Pensioner Larry Jamieson, 69, passed away February 21. He started sailing with the SIU in 1979, initially working for Crowley Towing & Transportation. Brother Jamieson primarily shipped in the steward department. He last sailed for Intrepid Personnel & Provisioning, and went on pension in 2011. He resided in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee.

JAMES PRUITT

Pensioner James Pruitt, 78, died March 7. Signing on with the SIU in 1969, he first worked for Steuart Transportation. Brother Pruitt was a member of the deck department. He last shipped with Express Marine, and became a pensioner in 2003. Brother Pruitt lived in Crisfield, Maryland.

CHARLES ROUGHTON

Pensioner Charles Roughton, 81, passed away February 22. He joined the SIU in 1962 when he worked for McAllister



Towing of Virginia. Sailing in the deck department, Brother Roughton remained with the same company for his entire career. He began collecting his pension in 2003 and was a resident of Chesapeake, Virginia.

NMU

In addition to the foregoing individuals, the following union members have also passed away. Insufficient information was available to develop summaries of their respective careers.

NAME	AGE	DOD
Canales, Esequiel	98	03/15/2020
Canu, Albert	96	03/02/2020
Derkits, Michael	94	03/07/2020
Funke, Fred	87	03/12/2020
Hamilton, Fred	84	03/01/2020
Jones, William	94	02/05/2020
Mendez, Rafael	90	10/19/2019
Pope, James	90	02/20/2020
Racine, Eustace	97	03/18/2020



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COVID-19 has impacted all of us. Union Plus can help.

Our Union Plus program partners have accommodations for members struggling during this public health crisis. Participants in our Union Plus Mortgage, Credit Card, Personal Loan, or Supplemental Insurance programs may be eligible for additional hardship assistance through the Union Plus Mortgage Assistance Program and Union Plus Hardship Help.

Visit unionplus.org and follow Union Plus on Facebook at facebook.com/unionplus for ongoing program updates and resources.

Be well and stay healthy,

The Union Plus team

For details visit unionplus.org


UNIONPLUS

5/20

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.

MAERSK CHICAGO (Maersk Line, Limited), January 19 – Chairman **Karl Mayhew**, Secretary **Memo Elfeky**, Educational Director **Darrell Goggins**, Engine Delegate **Syed Iqbal**, Steward Delegate **Leonardo Bagnol**. Educational director reminded members to keep documents up to date. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Vote of thanks for steward department for a job well done, including SA **Leonardo Bagnol**, who was nominated for January Safety Award. Daymen **Rogelio Agustin** and **Mariano Lino** were awarded the November and December Safety Awards, respectively.

OVERSEAS MARTINEZ (Overseas Ship Management), January 26 – Chairman **Anton Sulic**, Secretary **Mohsen Ali Al-Adani**, Educational Director **Anthony Hulsey**, Deck Delegate **Michael Ross**, Engine Delegate **Jr Lee Eludo**, Steward Delegate **Michael Ray**. Chairman advised crew to leave clean rooms for relief members and to stay on top of documents. Secretary reminded members to return dishes to galley. Educational director encouraged crew to take advantage of the upgrading opportunities at the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Piney Point, Maryland. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members requested more soda and snacks on board, a better selection of movies and a PlayStation 4 game console. New mattress support pads needed. Vote of thanks given to steward department for great meals. Next port: Portland, Oregon.

JOHN U.D. PAGE (Sealift Inc.), February 5 – Chairman **Eugene Perez**, Secretary **Raymond Gordon**, Engine Delegate **Nathan Bryant**, Steward Delegate **Toddrick Harold**. Members discussed Wi-Fi access aboard ship. Chairman thanked crew for working together at shipyard. Secretary reiterated importance of cleanliness on ship. Educational director mentioned Culinary 2.0 courses and recommended upgrading at the Paul Hall Center. Crew requested company-provided coveralls and personal protective equipment for work conditions. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members were encouraged to donate to SPAD (Seafarers Political Activities Donation), the union's voluntary political action fund. Next port: Jacksonville, Florida.

MAERSK DETROIT (Maersk Line, Limited), February 7 – Chairman **Terry Hester**, Secretary **Ronoldo Torres**, Educational Director **Trever Cohn**, Deck Delegate **John Walsh**, Engine Delegate **Abdulnaser Saeed**, Steward Delegate **Erik Lore**. Chairman encouraged crew to read President's Report in *Seafarers LOG* (available online and in print). Vote of thanks given to the steward department for good food. Educational director advised members to stay on top of documents. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew requested increase in vacation pay and TVs in each stateroom. Next port: Newark, New Jersey.

USNS BRUCE C. HEEZEN (Ocean Shipholdings), February 9 – Secretary **Sean Outlaw**, Ed-

ucational Director **Randy Corey**, Steward Delegate **Lizzy Robinson**. Cargo hoist installation taking place on ship. Members were encouraged to maintain a healthy work environment. Chairman reminded crew to continue working safely. Educational director reminded members to upgrade at the Piney Point school. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Crew went over President's Report

from *LOG*. Members requested eight hours off for every 30 hours worked or 16 days for 30. In the (hypothetical) event of harassment, crew was directed to use proper chain of command and have the ability to provide valid facts, dates, times, etc.

MAERSK ATLANTA (Maersk Line, Limited), February 20 – Chairman **Leroy Sierra**, Secre-

tary **Oscar Gomez**, Educational Director **Jing Hui Huang**, Steward Delegate **Alfrancis Bauzon**. No beefs or disputed OT reported. Members expressed appreciation for Wi-Fi installation. New vacuum needed. Vote of thanks given to the steward department for a job well done. Crew gave special thanks to captain for his support and putting extra money in the pot.

Teaming up for Military Exercise



The SIU-crewed *Baldomero Lopez* looms large as Navy personnel see an improved lighterage system in action Feb. 13 in Mayport, Florida. The offload operations were part of an exercise described by the Navy as training "critical expeditionary capabilities and facilitates bridging the seam between operations on land and sea." The *Lopez* is operated by Crowley. (U.S. Navy Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Bryn J. Venegas)

Know Your Rights

FINANCIAL REPORTS. The Constitution of the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters District 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:

Augustin Tellez, 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.

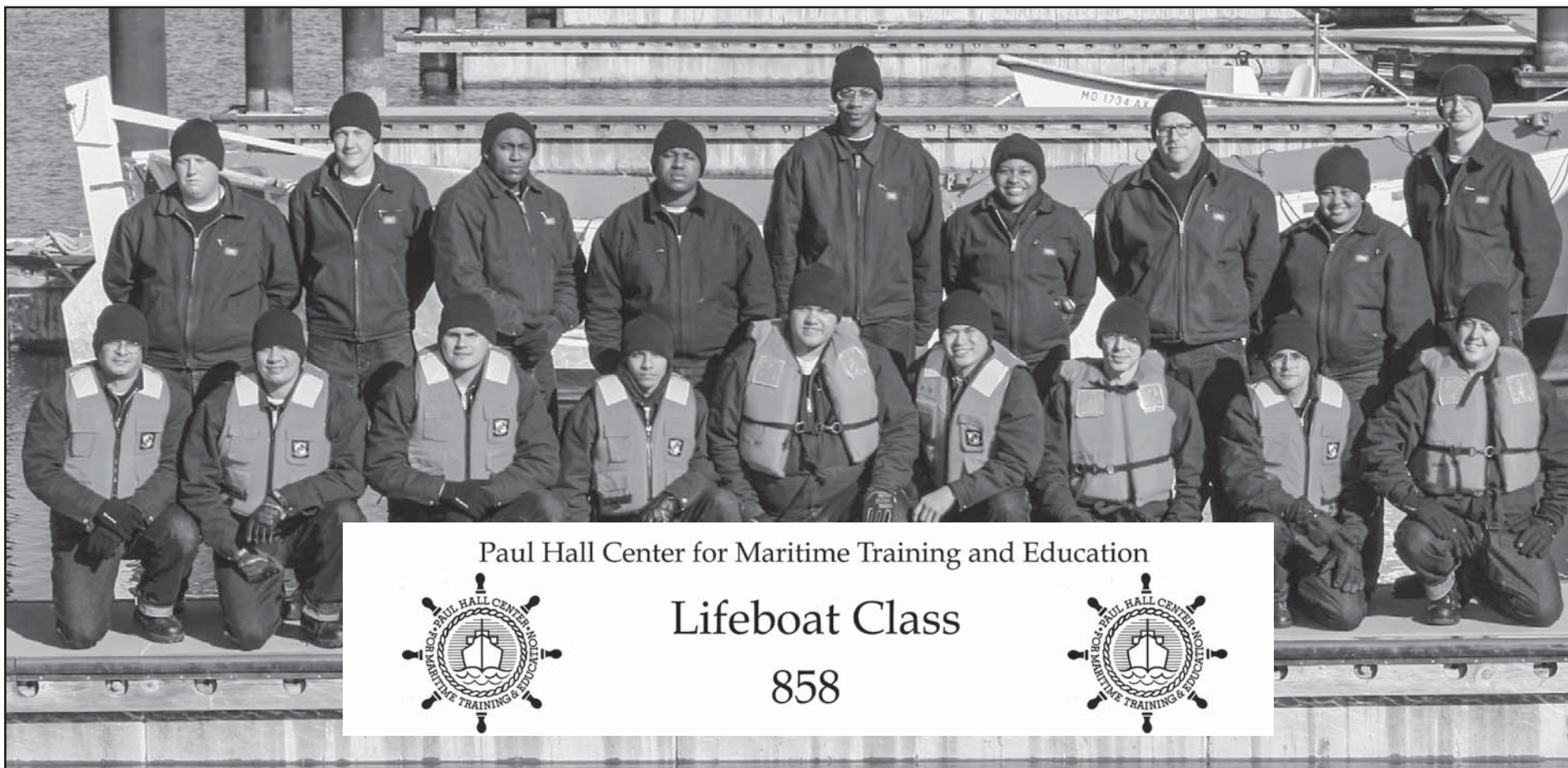
SEAFARERS POLITICAL ACTIVITY

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 Michael Sacco at headquarters by certified mail, return receipt requested. The address is:

Michael Sacco, President
Seafarers International Union
5201 Capital Gateway Drive
Camp Springs, MD 20746

Paul Hall Center Classes



Apprentice Water Survival Class #858 – Graduated December 27 (above, in alphabetical order): Brandon Bradley, Eliezer Estremera, Joel Frederick, Stephen Fretwell, Steven Gray, Alexis Guillory, Joseph Horton, Cordera Looney, Julian Mislá-Mendez, Taylor Rabb, Reinaldo Rivera, Johannis Rivera-Rivera, Kevin Santiago De Jesus, Kameron Sims, Melvin Singletary, Matthew Waiwaiole, Devon Watson and Herbert Weiss.



Welding – Graduated January 31 (above, left): Hector Jose Ginel. With Ginel is his instructor, Chris Raley.



Government Vessels (Apprentices) – Graduated January 10 (above, in alphabetical order): Edward Harnish, Kendall Harris, Robert Lange, Jamal Matthews, D'Artis Mitchell, Eric Amauris Rivas-Martinez and Juan Rafael Santiago-Robles.



Government Vessels (Upgraders) – Graduated December 13 (above, in alphabetical order): Glennorris Alston III, Erik Bain, Marlon Brown, Johnathan Davis, Matthew Juan Domen, William Flores-Gueits, Cody Higgs, Joanna Hoyt, Ferdinand Gabonada Hullana, Nicholas Jackson, Christopher Janics, Austin Leamer, Michael McDonald, Alexandre Mitchell, Ian Nichols, Christian Perito, Walter Sleva, Mykola Smirnov, Krystal Vancil, Enrique Velez, Steve Voth, Antonio Watson and Gary Williams.

Paul Hall Center Classes



BAPO – Graduated December 6: Javier Murillo (above, left) and Johnathan Davis.

RFPNW – Graduated December 6: Hamlet Ferreras (above, left) and Jose Gonzalez.



Tankship Familiarization LG – Graduated December 13 (above, in alphabetical order): Mohamed Abdul Alomari, Christopher Baxter, Manolo Velasquez Delos Santos, Leopoldo Estrada Martinez, Jose Gonzalez, Richard Huffman, Tina Knox, Joseph Eligino Lacaden, Nathaniel Miller, Waverly Moore, Jason Newsham, Renaudo Pierce, Abel Rios Jr., Chester Roberson Jr., Christopher Lim Sanchez, Jose Smith, Dennis Vale and Duane Washington.



MSC Ship Reaction Force – Graduated January 29 (above, in alphabetical order): Michael Bell-Wright, Kees Elling, Joshua Hinton, Devin Hoerr, Michael Pockat II, Salvador Vela Jr., Davis Vickery, Aleksey Gavrilovich Vigovskiy and Samuel Watterson. Class instructors John Thomas and Matthew Rogers are at the far left and far right, respectively.

Paul Hall Center Classes

Government Vessels – Graduated January 10 (photo at right, in alphabetical order): Brandy Baker, Jorge Arturo Corrales Barrantes, Thomas Cyrus Jr., Archie Eldridge Jr., Marvette Gallop, Devon Gray, Carter Powell, Hermano Rony Sillon, Benjamin Stanley and Nadiyah Taylor.



Basic Motor Plant – Graduated November 8 (above, in alphabetical order): Abdul-Ghaffar Abu-Bakr, Rodney Holmes, Donte Sawyer, Reginald White and Saddam Mohamed Yahia.



Basic Training (Basic Firefighting) – Graduated December 13: Michael Covington (above).



Basic Training (Basic Firefighting) – Graduated November 8 (above, in alphabetical order): Jose Gonzalez, Kurt Walker and Jonathan White.



Basic Training (Basic Firefighting) – Graduated November 22 (above, in alphabetical order): Antonio Jose Hernandez, Anthony Pace, Gennadiy Yuryevich Skripochenko, Rebecca Soriano and Edward Williams.

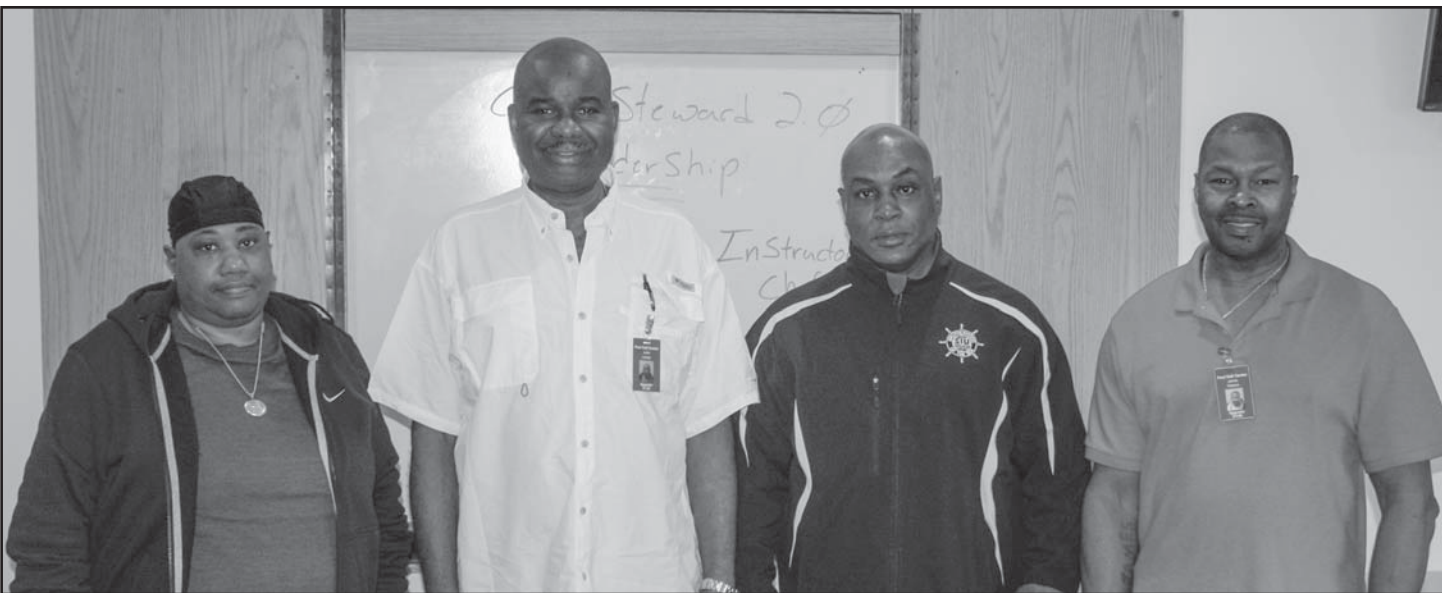
Paul Hall Center Classes



Certified Chief Cook (Module 1) – Graduated January 10 (above, in alphabetical order): Howard Brooks Jr., Mashonda Corley, Steven Ariel Lopez Ferrer, Lebrina Simmons and Darius Williams.



Certified Chief Cook 2.0 – Graduated January 17 (above, in alphabetical order): Steven Eberspacher, Alberto Casintahan Insong, Fernando Javier Marques Ortiz and Michelle Taylor.



Chief Steward 2.0 – Graduated January 31 (photo at left, in alphabetical order): Earl Castain, Justo Rufino Lacayo, Simone Solomon and James Watson.



Certified Chief Cook (Module 3) – Graduated February 7 (above, in alphabetical order): Howard Brooks Jr., Kristina Jones and Luis Sony Perez-Menendez Jr.



Chief Cook 2.0 – Graduated February 7 (above, from left) Teresito Oflas Reyes, Edgar Vilanueva Castillo and Marcelo Guevarra Param.



Chief Steward – Graduated February 14 (above, in alphabetical order): Bryan Onill Alvarez, Johnson Ashun, Jesus Geovannie Ortiz-Rivera and Jayson Velez-Cruz. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



Chief Steward 2.0 – Graduated February 14 (above, in alphabetical order): John Greubel, Christina Mateer and Norma West.

SEAFARERS LOG

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

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Text Alerts

Union Document Recalls SIU's War Effort

Editor's note: Coinciding with enactment of the Merchant Mariners of World War II Congressional Gold Medal Act of 2020, the LOG is reprinting excerpts from a 1951 booklet titled "The Seafarers in World War II." Penned by the late SIU historian John Bunker, the publication recapped SIU members' service in the war. More than 1,200 SIU members lost their lives to wartime service in the U.S. Merchant Marine.

Ready Then – Ready Now!

As timely as the next call for duty is this brief story of the Seafarers in World War II. It's a story of heroism and daring and a tremendous job ably done.

Trained crews from the Seafarers International Union are ready now – just as they were in World War II – to sail the ships wherever the freights of war must go; to bring home those hundreds of vital materials indispensable to our industrial economy.

Before any of the nation's armed services were ready for all-out duty in World War II, the merchant marine and the men who manned it were on the front lines of global action.

No executive manifestos, no formal enlistment, no testings of loyalty or pledges of devotion to their country's service were required to put SIU crews into action or prove their willingness to face danger – and death.

They helped to man the nation's cargo carriers long before there were guns or convoys to protect them, inspired by that sense of patriotism and pride of profession which has characterized the maritime industry and its merchant seamen time and again throughout the nation's history.

As employees of a private industry which converted almost overnight to 100 percent war service, SIU crews did their jobs in World War II with an efficiency that saved the nation millions of dollars. They were paid at wage rates prevailing in shore-side industries for comparable skills and responsibilities, not to mention the great personal risk to which they were subjected in front line service.

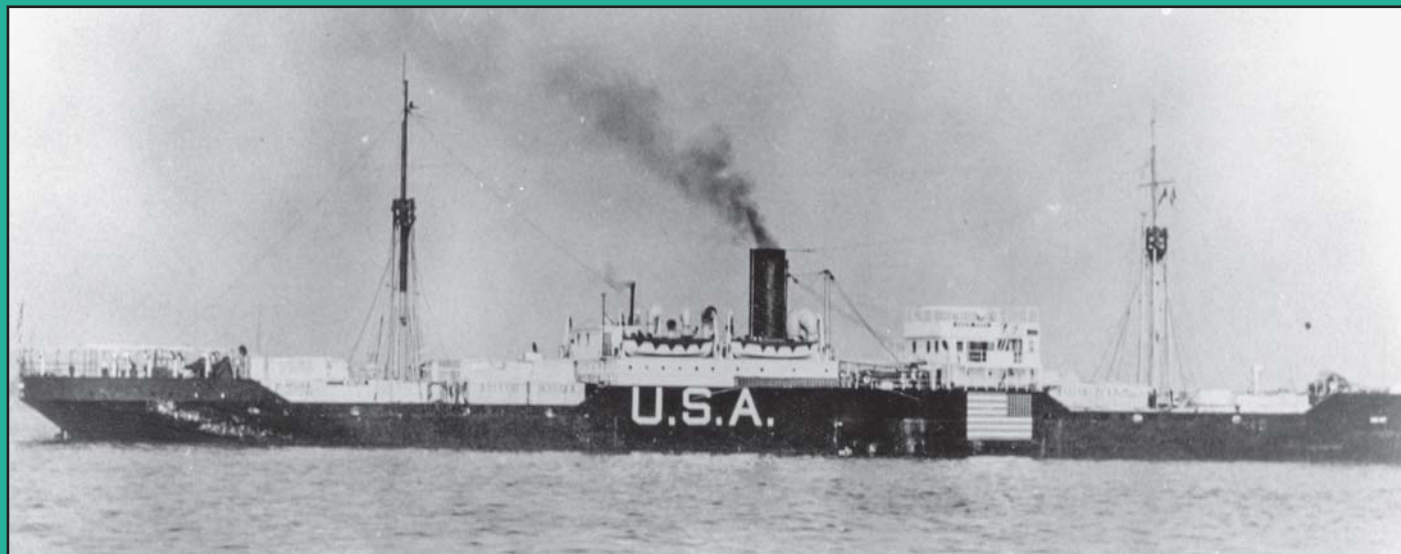
Throughout the war, SIU ships were crewed through the union's hiring halls in an efficient system of manning which dispatched thousands of men to freighters, tugs, tankers and transports. The union also served as a practical means of recruiting personnel for the merchant service.

Through a great expansion of facilities since the war, the SIU is well equipped to do the job of recruitment and manning even more completely in any future emergency.

In these critical days when the nation's armed forces are scattered over large parts of the world and we are becoming increasingly dependent on foreign lands for raw materials, the merchant marine is one of the country's most vital assets.

Historically resilient and tough of fiber, nurturing a race of men who are skillful and resourceful, the merchant marine is ever first to make available its men and facilities for the nation's service.

And the men of the Seafarers International Union are ready now as they were in 1942 to write another chapter of loy-



The SIU-crewed *Robin Moor* is pictured in 1941

alty and able performance of duty into the annals of the American merchant service.

The Robin Moor ... Prelude To War

This is the story of SIU ships in World War II – the thrilling saga of the cargo ships and the men who sailed them over the far-flung ocean tracks to write an epic chapter in American maritime history.

Here is the story of the storm-swept, submarine-swept, bomb-packed road to Russia over the misty Arctic – the epic of the ships that sailed alone during the first hectic months after Pearl Harbor, when there were no coastal convoys and torpedoed tankers became flaming pyres along our eastern seaboard; when the freight ships and the tankers went out unprotected and unarmed but never lacked for crews.

Here, too, is the log of fighting freighters whose Oerlikon guns traced tales of high courage in a myriad of foreign skies. Wherever the freights of war were needed, these cargo carriers sailed them through.

SIU ships freighted everything imaginable in the way of war goods and the necessities of life to our Allies, to our overseas garrisons, to the beachheads and the supply ports for the fighting fronts.

Assorted Cargoes

Ships left the States loaded deep with everything from cigarettes to Sherman tanks; with barbed wire, guns, powder, railroad cars, airplanes, dehydrated eggs, beans, grain, flour, bombs, trucks, clothing, oil, gasoline – and so many other items that a complete manifest could never be made of it all.

In addition to supplying half the world with fuel, food and the tools of war, ships of the Seafarers International Union brought back to this, the world's arsenal of democracy, the vital raw materials without which a war effort on such a tremendous scale would have been impossible.

Little has been said about this homeward-bound traffic from foreign lands during the war, but it was just as important as the bombs, the grain and the cannon that were carried out of American ports in an endless stream for five war-harried years.

Our freighters and those of our Allies brought to this country manganese, burlap, mica, rubber, timber, bauxite,

iron ore, sugar, jute, spices and hundreds of other industrial necessities, without which we would have found the fighting of a war not only most inconvenient but downright impossible.

They also helped to carry what normal commerce there was between the United States and Caribbean, Central and South American countries, which depended upon us for the numerous requirements of daily existence.

When the war at sea was finally through and bright lights shone through the open ports of ships at sea, on peaceful missions once again, the Seafarers International Union had paid a heavy price in ships and men.

The merchant marine as a whole lost 6,000 seamen, dead or missing. A total of 1,554 America-flag ships were lost by torpedoing, bombing, mines and the varied other accidents of war. Of these, no less than 570 were lost in direct action with the enemy!

Our merchant marine had its baptism of fire long before Pearl Harbor. The *SS City of Rayville* struck a mine and sank off Australia in 1940 to be followed by the *Charles Pratt*, a Standard Oil Company tanker, which was torpedoed off West Africa in December of the same year.

Even before these actions, the *SS City of Flint* had made the headlines and caused an international furor when it was captured, while en route to Norway in October 1939, by the German pocket battleship *Deutschland* on the charge that it was carrying contraband.

After the eventual release of this ship and her crew, it was still many months before Pearl Harbor. Then came the incident of the SIU-manned *SS Robin Moor*, bound for South Africa from New York, which was shelled and sunk by a German submarine, eliciting from President Roosevelt a historic pronouncement on freedom of the seas.

Chief Officer Melvin Mundy was on the bridge of the *Robin Moor* at four o'clock in the morning of May 21, when he saw a light blinking on the horizon, signaling in international code the letters AAA or "what ship are you?"

Mr. Mundy answered: "American steamship, *Robin Moor*." Captain William W. Myers came on the bridge, and to the *Moor's* question "Who are you?" the answer was signaled back "Submarine." This was followed by the com-

mand, "Don't use your wireless."

A boat was then launched from the freighter, according to the U-boat's orders, and pulled over to the submarine, where the Germans questioned First Mate Mundy about the vessel's destination and cargo. The sub commander insisted that the *Robin Moor* carried contraband, despite Mr. Mundy's assertions that the cargo included nothing more warlike than pleasure automobiles, engines, tin plate, and general merchandise for South African stores.

Crew and passengers were given 20 minutes to dress and get into the boats, after which the sub put 33 shells into the ship, sinking her in 18 minutes and without any chance to dispatch an SOS.

Until weeks later nothing was known of the freighter's fate, for the submarine departed without reporting the incident and the 45 crew members and passengers were left adrift.

Of the four lifeboats that got safely away from the ship, the first was picked up by a freighter 13 days later and the last was not found until it had sailed 700 miles, its occupants subsisting on a meager ration of biscuits and water.

When the first survivors of the *Robin Moor* were landed and news of the sinking stirred the nation, President Roosevelt sent a special message to Congress. The date was June 20, 1941.

Said the President: "I am under the necessity of bringing to the attention of the Congress the ruthless sinking by a German submarine of an American ship, the *Robin Moor*, in the South Atlantic Ocean (25 degrees and 40 minutes west, 6 degrees and 10 minutes north) while the vessel was on the high seas en route to Africa.

'We are not Yielding'

"... We must take it that notice has now been served upon us that no American ship or cargo on any of the seven seas can consider itself immune from the acts of piracy. Notice is served on us, in effect, that the German Reich proposes so to intimidate the United States that we would be dissuaded from carrying out our chosen policy of helping Britain to survive.

"... Were we to yield on this we would inevitably submit to world domination at the hands of the present leaders

Continued on Page 10