

# SEAFARERS LOG

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

## SIU Supports DEFENDER-Europe 20



Six SIU crewed vessels earlier this year played vital roles in a large-scale military exercise. Five of the ships are enrolled in the U.S. Maritime Security Program (segments of the exercise continued at press time). Above, an Abrams tank drives off the SIU crewed *MV Endurance* (U.S. Navy photo by Travis Weger). In photo at right, mariners aboard the *USNS Benavidez*, including SIU Ordinary Seaman Jiamall Whitaker Brickers (far right), steer the ship into position during a convoy with the guided-missile cruiser *USS Vella Gulf* and the Seafarers crewed *MV Resolve* (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair). Pages 10-11.



## Halls Reopen, School to Follow

SIU hiring halls reopened June 15, and the union-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education has announced plans to resume classes in early August. Across the board, many precautions are being taken – and the situations remain fluid in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic. Crew changes are continuing, though not without assorted complications overseas. Meanwhile, the definition of PPE has expanded during the pandemic, as reflected in the group photo from the *USNS Gordon* (directly above). Pictured from left aboard the Ocean Shipholdings vessel are 2/E Shy, EO Rob Fink, Recertified Bosun Karl Mayhew, 3/M Forrest G., AB Karen Allen, Chief Engineer Ken, STOS Brandon Williams and C/M Andy Lucchese. They are sporting face coverings that were hand-made by a good friend of the ship's 1st Engineer Elizabeth Mack. The photo at left shows SIU members lined up at the Jacksonville, Florida, hiring hall as it reopens June 15. Page 3.

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# President's Report

## Opportunity for Justice

For those of us in the labor movement, or, really, for anyone familiar with our work, the awful irony was impossible to miss. Vandals extensively damaged the lobby and other first-floor areas of the AFL-CIO headquarters building late on May 31. They broke windows and doors and set fires in the facility as other individuals engaged in peaceful, legitimate demonstrations in the nation's capital (and across the country).



Michael Sacco

For those who don't know, the AFL-CIO building is across from the White House.

Ultimately, as AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said, the building itself is just that – a building. Thankfully, no one was inside at the time, and the sprinkler system at least limited the damage, which nevertheless was extensive.

The irony, of course, is that the federation and its affiliates, including the SIU, have long been on the front lines of the fight for racial justice – not just when it comes to law enforcement, but also for economic equality. Unions typically have higher percentages of minorities in their memberships than the general public. The gains we've secured throughout the decades have helped union and unrepresented workers (of all colors) alike, but for those who enjoy the benefits of membership, we focus not on race but on the "black and white" written in the contract.

Many, many years ago, the SIU was segregated. I am not blind to the racism that existed in the labor movement in general, either. Thankfully, we turned the corner within our ranks a long time ago. It's certainly possible to cherry-pick examples of current individual discrimination, but on the whole, organized labor has been and remains at the forefront of this fight.

While we're on the subject, let's get something straight. When someone says, "Black Lives Matter," they are not saying other lives don't matter.

We all saw the video of George Floyd being suffocated by a police officer – a sickening sight that ultimately resulted in Floyd's death. It's not an isolated example, and it called attention to a longstanding problem in a way that cannot and must not be avoided.

But that's not the only struggle faced by our African-American brothers and sisters. I'm not sure how widely known this is, but historically, black workers have faced unemployment rates twice as high as those of their white counterparts. And from what I've read, the statistics can't be explained away by differences in levels of education. At every level of education, the black unemployment rate is significantly higher than the white unemployment rate, even for those workers with college or advanced degrees.

Outside the labor movement, there are also, to this day, significant wage gaps between white and black workers. No matter how you slice the data, that's the reality.

Here's some more reality: Almost all police officers are decent people doing their best in a difficult job. Most people aren't racists, and, as we saw with the AFL-CIO building, there are those who want to create trouble.

But we still live in a world divided in many ways by color lines. To build a different, better economy and better way of life, we need power that can only come from solidarity – and solidarity has to start with having all our voices be heard. We should begin by acknowledging our own shortcomings and honestly addressing issues that are faced by the communities in which our members live – both the problems and the solutions. We have to find a way to see with each other's eyes.

As with any longstanding problem, there isn't an overnight solution here. But I'm confident in our country, our movement, our union. Let's keep the lines of communication and dialogue open and let's work – together – for meaningful change.

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Volume 82 Number 7

July 2020

The SIU online: [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org)

The Seafarers LOG (ISSN 1086-4636) is published monthly by the Seafarers International Union; Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters, AFL-CIO; 5201 Capital Gateway Drive; Camp Springs, MD 20746. Telephone (301) 899-0675. Periodicals postage paid at Southern Maryland 20790-9998. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Seafarers LOG, 5201 Capital Gateway Drive, Camp Springs, MD 20746.

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

# Secretary Chao Thanks Industry

United States Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao released a video statement on May 7, in which she expressed her gratitude to the men and women of the American maritime industry.

"During these challenging times, I want to send a grateful message to everyone in the U.S. maritime industry to thank you for your work and dedication," Chao began. "Our nation is so thankful for your continued service to our country during this most unusual time."

She continued, "U.S. mariners and the U.S.-flag shipping fleet have been critical in helping to keep supply chains moving, and are an important part of our national defense. The department is on the job 24/7, doing everything possible to help you. Knowing that U.S. mariners will always respond to the call of duty gives all of us a sense of security. You are helping our country get through this crisis, and successfully prepare for economic recovery."

"For that, you are to be applauded. You are an inspiration. Thank you, for all that you do for our country," she concluded.

The video is linked on the SIU website.



Elaine L. Chao  
U.S. Secretary of Transportation

# Congressional Representatives Voice Strong Support for Merchant Marine

U.S. Reps. Steny Hoyer (D-Maryland) and Elaine Luria (D-Virginia) are reminding fellow members of Congress that the U.S. Merchant Marine is vital to national, economic and homeland security.

Luria on May 5 hosted a press call featuring Hoyer along with American maritime industry leaders, including SIU Executive Vice President Augie Tellez; Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association President Marshall Ainley; American Maritime Officers National Vice President Christian Spain; Maritime Trades Department Executive Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Duncan; Maersk Line, Limited President Bill Woodhour, and several others.

Luria and Hoyer said they are pushing to include U.S.-flag shipping in upcoming stimulus packages stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic. In particular, they are urging that participants in the U.S. Maritime Security Program (MSP) receive additional stipends. They also recommend increasing American-flag carriage of preference cargoes, and upholding the Jones Act.

Tellez thanked both Luria and Hoyer for their continued and steadfast support of the maritime industry, describing them as "staunch allies." His remarks focused on American mariners rather than the laws and programs that keep Old Glory flying on the oceans, lakes and waterways.

"Our members play a vital role in keeping commerce flowing," Tellez stated. "We're the folks on the front lines of this crisis, ensuring that the nation's economic and national security are protected and defended."

He added, "Our folks don't get to go home at night. They are doing a job, many of them well beyond their normal tour of duty. They know the importance of what they do, and they are dedicated. On behalf of the unsung heroes of the U.S. Merchant Marine, thank you for everything you do for us."

Luria recently sent a letter to U.S. House and Senate leaders asking for their support of American-flag ships and their crews.

Expounding on that communication, she said during the call that a drop-off in both government cargo and commercial cargo means it's the right time to boost the MSP. "This program is an essential part of our national security," she stated, and then added her ongoing backing of the Jones Act and cargo preference.

Hoyer, whose district includes the SIU-affiliated

Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, said the pandemic should remind everyone about the importance of maintaining U.S. manufacturing capabilities, American jobs – and a strong U.S.-flag maritime industry.

"The maritime industry is an absolutely critical component of our national security infrastructure," he stated. "COVID-19 has put a lot of our capabilities at risk. One thing it has made clear is the critical need to make things in America. It's incumbent upon us to maintain our maritime capacity.... If we do not invest in keeping our maritime industry and our sailors ready to go, we will be in real trouble. This is not an optional investment."

He said the maritime industry "is facing the same problems every other business in America has run into. This industry is a national security priority – both the ships and the personnel are critically important. We need to make sure they have the resources to be sustained."

Hoyer also pointed out that Luria's active-duty service in the U.S. Navy helps make her "a perfect advocate and somebody who has a deep knowledge of the vital role civilian mariners play."

Lastly, he expressed "great pride in the men and women who are in Piney Point (at the Paul Hall Center). They are a wonderful example of how industry and labor work together. The school is one of the great training centers in our country, and maybe in the world. Augie Tellez and the other leaders of our merchant marine are a critical component of our community."

Woodhour said the decline in cargoes "shows no realistic sign of ending anytime in the near future." He is concerned that the mariner pool will dwindle, and said the proposed additional stipend will help avoid layoffs and layoffs, even though it's not a long-term solution.

"We stand beside our friends in maritime labor," Woodhour said.

Later, when answering a reporter's question, Woodhour pointed out that many other countries heavily subsidize different sectors of their maritime industries, on a scale that dwarfs anything done in the U.S.

Luria wrapped up the call by conveying her "thanks to civilian mariners. We will keep pushing to support the MSP and the other things that make the U.S. Merchant Marine continue to be a viable, important part of our economy and our national defense."



U.S. Rep. Steny Hoyer  
(D-Maryland)



U.S. Rep. Elaine Luria  
(D-Virginia)

## Halls Reopen; School Resumes Aug. 1

### Union Works with State Dept., Congress, Others for Overseas Crew Changes

*Editor's note: The COVID-19 pandemic remains a constantly changing situation. Accordingly, SIU members are encouraged to check the union's website and stay in touch with the halls for the latest information. There is a prominent COVID-19 section on the home page at [www.seafarers.org](http://www.seafarers.org). For major announcements, the SIU also sends text alerts linking to the web posts.*

As pandemic-related restrictions started to loosen across the United States, the SIU cautiously and deliberately reopened its hiring halls and announced plans to resume classes at its affiliated school in Piney Point, Maryland.

Many states began advancing to different phases of reopening from late May to mid-June. However, the COVID-19 pandemic remained a massively serious threat – as of June 15, at least 114,000 people had died from the coronavirus in the U.S. and more than two million cases had been reported.

Following are some of the major developments since publication of the June edition of the *LOG*:

- A crew member from the *USNS Leroy Grumman*, which is part of the SIU Government Services Division fleet, became the first known American mariner to die from the coronavirus. Though not a union member, Joseph Bondoc was part of the unlicensed crew. He was one of more than 20 crew members diagnosed with COVID-19 while the vessel was in a Boston shipyard. A contractor from that same yard also died from the virus.

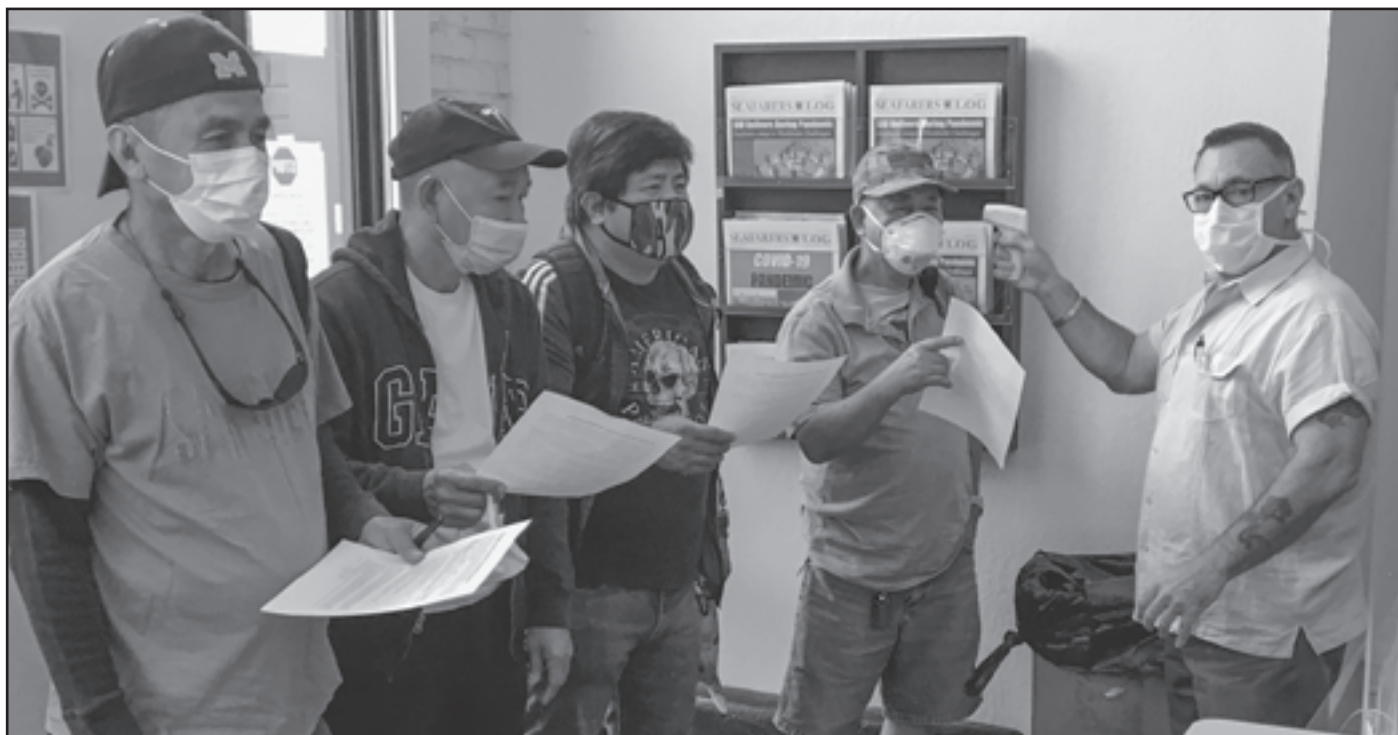
- SIU hiring halls reopened June 15, with numerous safeguards. Vessel servicing also resumed on June 15, wherever allowable, and union headquarters (located in Camp Springs, Maryland) transitioned from a skeleton crew to fuller staffing in all departments.

Pandemic-related modifications have been made at the halls, including extensive cleanings, installation of dividers, shipments of PPE for members and staff, rearranging seats to promote social distancing, and more. Members are required to wear a face covering when entering the building. (A limited number of masks are available at the halls.)

Additionally, visitors must bring a completed medical questionnaire (available on the SIU website) with them when they arrive at a hall.

Similar protocols and precautions are in place at headquarters.

In an effort to keep the numbers down in



Members return to the halls in Oakland, California (photo above) and in Jacksonville, Florida (photo at left, below). Face coverings and temperature checks are among numerous precautions being taken at the halls. SIU VP Nick Celona is at far right in photo above.

the halls during this transition of reopening, members should be aware that even after June 15, registration and reclaims are still being done by phone, temporarily. Regular job calls take place for rotary shipping, and general business can be conducted at the halls (filing for vacation benefits, beefs, etc.).

- The SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, in Piney Point, Maryland, is scheduled to reopen Aug. 1. An array of safety-related modifications are being implemented.

Initially, the school will offer a limited number of upgrading courses, with reduced class sizes. The full course content will be presented in a shorter-than-usual period, in order to get students in and out more quickly. Apprenticeship training will resume in September.

At least during the initial reopening period, students must remain on campus for the duration of their respective courses (including weekends). Students are asked to pack and prepare for their time at the school just as if they were heading to a ship. The school does not have a firm timeline for this policy, but envisions it as temporary.

The original course schedule for 2020 has been completely scrapped. New course dates are available on the SIU website and will be published in the *Seafarers LOG*. Course dates will continue to be added.

Many steps are being taken to help ensure both functionality and safety. Meal periods will be assigned, altered and staggered. Class starting times will be altered to help promote social distancing. No family members or guests should come to the school until further notice. Gym access will be limited.

The following courses will be offered beginning in August: Able Seafarer Deck; Certified Chief Cook; Chief Cook Assessment Programs; BT Revalidation; Chief Steward; Government Vessels; and BT/Advanced Firefighting Revalidation.

Those with questions should contact the admissions office by phone at (301) 994-0010 (8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Eastern Time), or

by email at [admissions@seafarers.org](mailto:admissions@seafarers.org).

- Crew changes have been among the largest challenges of the pandemic, particularly for the SIU-crewed “shuttle” ships that normally remain overseas. Nevertheless, significant progress was happening at press time.

In late May, SIU President Michael Sacco and the presidents of five other U.S. maritime unions contacted the U.S. Secretary of State and the U.S. Secretary of Defense with an urgent call to facilitate overseas reliefs for American mariners. Signing the letter were Sacco; AMO President Paul Doell; MEBA President Marshall Ainley; MM&P President Don Marcus; SUP President Dave Connolly; and MFOW President Anthony Poplawski.

The letter – which was far from the SIU’s lone effort – reads in part, “Scores of U.S. mariners are presently trapped aboard cargo ships, unable to take leave or return home due to extreme COVID-19 lockdown measures imposed by foreign governments. This humanitarian crisis, if not resolved as soon as possible, may threaten the essential supply chain for some 200,000 active U.S. military personnel now serving overseas. The cargo carried on these U.S. flagged ships supports our troops, our allies and the global economy.”

“Ship’s captains, officers and crew members who sail under the American flag and perform these essential functions for our country have not been able to set foot on dry land in months. Their workplaces have become floating prisons. Crew members are in danger of losing access to life-sustaining medicines. In many cases, they cannot contact their loved ones at home in the United States as some of these vessels lack Internet access.”

“It is well documented that isolation and excessive time serving aboard ship can create increased fatigue and psychological stress, raising the risk of marine accidents. Thousands of mariners across the globe who work on foreign-flagged vessels are in the same predicament.” (The full text of the letter is available on the SIU website.)

The SIU also is actively coordinating with vessel operators, U.S. embassies, the International Maritime Organization, International Labor Organization, World Health Organization, and directly with the host nations to expedite crew changes.

Meanwhile, several SIU-contracted vessel operators chartered a plane to make crew changes in Diego Garcia. That plane returned to the U.S. in late May after the changes were made.

Pre-boarding quarantines largely have become the norm, regardless of vessel location. With that in mind, the SIU in late May posted a message to the membership noting, “It’s extremely important that all members adhere to the agreed-upon protocols prior to joining a ship. This applies whether you are self-isolating at home or in a hotel. While we are navigating these uncharted waters, think of the pre-boarding safety regimen as your part of helping ensure the vessel’s crew remains COVID-free. And remember that if you fail to comply, you are affecting not only yourself but your future shipmates and the fellow members who are awaiting reliefs.”

- The July membership meetings have been cancelled, but plans are being made to conduct the August meetings, with safety measures.

- The U.S. Coast Guard’s National Maritime Center (NMC) on June 4 announced several additional extensions for various documentation. Merchant mariner credentials (MMC) and medical certificates (national endorsements only) that expire between March 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2020 are extended until Dec. 31, 2020. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential with a copy of the NMC notice, which is posted in the Latest News and COVID-19 sections of the SIU website.

The agency also announced that MMCs with STCW endorsements that expire between March 1, 2020 and Sept. 30, 2020 are extended until Dec. 31, 2020. The same is true for STCW medical certificates that expire between March 1, 2020 and September 30, 2020.



## SHBP Relaxes Some Rules Governing Cobra Coverage

During the course of this COVID-19 pandemic, the Seafarers Health and Benefits Plan has relaxed certain time limits

for COBRA coverage and for the submission of appeals for denied medical claims. For detailed information on these

changes, you can contact the claims department or the membership assistance department at (800) 252-4674.



U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao (left), Maritime Administrator Mark Buzby (center) and Gen. Stephen Lyons (right) are shown in the National Maritime Day video produced by the U.S. Maritime Administration.

## MARAD Delivers Rousing Maritime Day Video

The U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) and its Maritime Administration (MARAD) definitely made the best of a challenging circumstance for this year's National Maritime Day celebration in the nation's capital.

The agency produced a half-hour video and posted it on the MARAD YouTube channel the morning of May 22. Viewer comments reflect sincere appreciation for the stirring tribute, which featured comments from DOT Secretary Elaine L. Chao, U.S. Transportation Command (TRANSCOM) Commanding Officer Gen. Stephen R. Lyons, Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby, TV host Mike Rowe and World War II U.S. Merchant Mariners David Yoho, James Monteleone, George Shaw and Hugh Stevens.

This year's theme was, "Resilient Sealift for a Resilient Nation."

"It's great to be with you today – if only virtually – but Maritime Day must go on," Buzby said in his opening remarks. He then introduced Chao, whom he described as "a strong advocate for the importance of the maritime industry to our nation's economic growth, and to our national security."

Chao offered a brief history of the day of remembrance: "National Maritime Day was established by Congress in 1933 to commemorate the first transoceanic voyage of the American steamship Savannah. It was a way to celebrate America's long and deep maritime tradition, and the innovation that has powered it, from [steamships] to nuclear ships and beyond. In World War II, merchant mariners were an essential part of the war effort, and their casualty rate exceeded that of all the other Armed Forces."

She continued, "Today, we salute the men and women of the American maritime community, who have helped ensure that people, supplies and equipment get to where they need to be during times of peace, war and

natural disasters.

"Our U.S.-flag fleet is an integral part of our national security, and as we face the COVID-19 crisis of today, the department is doing everything we can to support our country's maritime sector, and ensure that the industry is able to ramp up when the economic recovery begins."

Buzby then offered his remarks, speaking from the deck of the SIU-crewed Ready Reserve Force vessel SS Cornhusker State in Newport News, Virginia.

"Our motto in the U.S. Merchant Marine is, 'In Peace and War.' It's on our merchant marine flag, we talk about it in speeches all the time," he noted. "It's been a part of our industry since before this nation was even a nation. It's what drives all of us who have served at sea and those of us who support those who go to sea. The idea is that we're going to get it through, no matter what – whether it's peacetime, wartime, no matter what, we're going to get it through."

"And certainly, throughout our nation's history, this industry has persevered through a Revolutionary War, a Civil War, two global conflicts and any number of regional conflicts," Buzby added. "The merchant marine has always been there, and has never faltered. Now here we are, facing a new foe, a new global conflict, but this time instead of man versus man, it's man versus a virus. And the U.S. Merchant Marine is still persevering through it all."

Buzby then touched on the service of mariners during World War II, before saying, "Congress just approved recently the Congressional Gold Medal to award all those merchant marine veterans of World War II, who ... persevered in wartime to make sure the Allies had victory in Europe and in the Pacific. Today, you mariners are facing the same, very grave challenges, and we have to do the very same thing. We have to come up with coun-

termeasures, things that are going to mitigate that risk and keep our ships sailing, and you're doing that – whether it's through personal protective equipment, social distancing, contact tracking, the deep cleaning of our vessels, you're making it happen and you're still getting our ships through. And I think that's a real tribute, as much to you and this generation as it was to those who preceded you and other generations who did what you had to do to get those ships through. I think it's something that you all should be very, very proud of."

"I'm very proud of the conduct of all of you, whether it's been labor, the shipowners and operators, or whether it's been government entities," he continued. "The level of cooperation that has been exhibited, I think, says so much about this industry and why we are so strong and why we have been able to persevere through all these years."

Buzby concluded, "In the coming months, when we do get this thing behind us, every one of us that had the watch during this time should take a great deal of pride in the fact that, when it was our time, when our nation called upon us, when the challenges were issued, that we all stood tall, did what we had to do, and made it happen. In peace and war."

Lyons said, "As this audience knows, TRANSCOM, one of 11 combatant commands, is responsible to the Secretary of Defense and the Commander in Chief to deploy and sustain military forces around the globe to support our national security interests. In doing so, we count on a strong, U.S.-flag maritime industry – a maritime industry that has a long history of enabling military victory. Today, just as in World War II, the United States-flag merchant ships, the mariners who crew them, and our commercial sealift industry continue to play a critical role in our nation's defense by providing sealift ships, mariners, and access to global seaport networks."

He continued, "As a result, the United

States' ability to project and sustain military power across transoceanic distances remains a strategic competitive advantage, and is admired by friends and adversaries. TRANSCOM, working with MARAD and key industry partners, provides an essential element of deterrence and, if necessary, the unquestionable ability to respond with overwhelming, decisive force, most of which will be moved by sealift. The resulting combined effort is a world order that encourages peace, and opportunities for freedom, while deterring a great power war for over 75 years and counting.

"The United States is today, and always will be, a maritime nation," Lyons concluded. "The most important resource of a maritime nation is people: professional men and women of high technical proficiency, who sail with high technical competency, hard work and innovation. That is why, at the end of the day, it is a U.S. flag on a ship, with U.S. crews at the helm, that remain essential to our national defense."

Yoho began by expressing his thanks on behalf of his fellow merchant veterans for the recent passage of the Congressional Gold Medal Act. He then gave a brief history of the merchant marine in World War II, to which fellow veterans Monteleone, Shaw and (now Captain) Stevens added their insights into the life of a World War II mariner.

Following those remarks, Buzby placed a ceremonial wreath into the sea, as the traditional Eight Bells were rung in honor of fallen mariners. Afterwards, Rowe spoke about his relationship to the maritime industry, including an uncle who was a mariner, before concluding the ceremony with the singing of the Merchant Marine anthem, "Heave Ho."

Meanwhile, despite pandemic-rooted limitations, the SIU observed National Maritime Day in other newfound ways. SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel and SIU Houston Safety Director Kevin Sykes were featured in separate online interviews about the industry.

### President Issues Maritime Day Proclamation

Since the founding of our great Nation, we have relied on merchant mariners to deliver goods to market and strengthen our national security. On National Maritime Day, we recognize the United States Merchant Marine for all it does to facilitate our commerce and protect our interests at sea.

Our Nation's merchant mariners enable peaceful trade with countries around the world and provide vital sealift support to our Armed Forces. Whether on the ocean or our inland waterways, merchant mariners support our economy by transporting billions of dollars of imported and exported goods. These men and women also sail bravely into combat zones to deliver supplies and weapons to our military men and women, playing a critical role in the success of their mission.

This year, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, we pay tribute to the United States merchant mariners who served as the "Fourth Arm of Defense" for our

Nation during the war. Earlier this year, I was proud to sign into law long-overdue legislation to award the Congressional Gold Medal to the valiant civilian merchant mariners who maintained critical supply lines to our overseas troops and allies during the Second World War. Many of these mariners endured brutal attacks from German U-boats, and more than 6,000 of them perished at sea or were held as prisoners of war. This number includes 142 students of the United States Merchant Marine Academy – distinguishing it as the only one of the five service academies authorized to carry a battle standard.

As we remember the tremendous sacrifices of the World War II merchant mariners, we also continue to honor the present-day citizen mariners who make up our Nation's world-class Merchant Marine. Today, we pay tribute to their expertise, patriotism, and dedication to serving our country and ensuring our national security.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 20, 1933, has designated May 22 of each year as "National Maritime Day" to commemorate the first transoceanic voyage by a steamship in 1819 by the S.S. Savannah. By this resolution, the Congress has authorized and requested the President to issue annually a proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, DONALD J. TRUMP, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2020, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to mark this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand twenty, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and forty-fourth.

DONALD J. TRUMP

# Industry Celebrates Jones Act Centennial

June 5 marked the 100th anniversary of the passage of the Merchant Marine Act of 1920. Within this important legislation is the language that governs America's waterborne freight cabotage – the Jones Act.

Named for the bill's primary sponsor – U.S. Senator Wesley Jones (R-Washington) – the Jones Act simply states that cargo moved from one domestic port to another domestic port must be carried aboard a U.S.-crewed, U.S.-flagged, U.S.-built and U.S.-owned vessel.

The Jones Act oversees the movement of goods along America's ocean shorelines, Great Lakes ports and inland waterways.

"The Jones Act remains a pillar of not only the United States maritime industry, but also our country's national, economic and homeland security," stated SIU President Michael Sacco. "It's a source of family-wage jobs both on the water and ashore. It protects our nation in so many ways."

A 2019 study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the Transportation Institute showed the Jones Act is responsible for 650,000 American jobs creating more

than \$40 billion annually in income. Workers whose jobs are related to the law can be found in all 50 states.

Cargo shipping is not the only maritime aspect covered by the Jones Act. It includes the U.S.-flag dredging industry as well.

"The Jones Act has been attacked by unsubstantiated claims for years," declared Maritime Trades Department (MTD) Vice President Jerry Abell. "In this day and time of viruses that we have no vaccines for and unprecedented death tolls, this act should be our first line of defense to protect the American shipping and dredging industries and the health of the American workforce from foreign enemies. I cannot stress enough how important the Jones Act is to the security and economic success of the country." (Abell is President/Business Manager for Dredging Local 25 of the International Union of Operating Engineers.)

Throughout the decades, the Jones Act has received bipartisan support from the White House and members of Congress. Military leaders also have expressed their backing for the law as it not only provides well-trained American mariners who crew

vessels taking needed goods for armed forces located around the world, but also supplies another set of eyes from American citizen-seafarers within U.S. ports, harbors and waterways for unlawful activities.

"Many people do not realize that the Jones Act was not America's first cabotage law," noted MTD Executive Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Duncan. "In fact, among the original laws passed by the first Congress in 1789-90 were several designed to protect the nation's fledgling maritime industry."

At one time, foreign-flagged and foreign-crewed vessels were permitted to sail along the inland waterways and on the Great Lakes. These vessels and crews did not then, nor have to now, meet America's labor, building and safety standards. After a series of disasters that claimed American lives, Congress worked on various measures to strengthen the cabotage laws.

During World War I, the United States did not have much of a merchant fleet. Many businesses depended on commercial vessels from Britain, France, Germany and other nations to export and import goods. When the war took these vessels away,

Americans were forced to pay a premium to move cargo. This led to the 1920 Merchant Marine Act with its inclusion of the Jones Act.

Despite its value to the American economy and the nation's security, the Jones Act continually faces attacks from outside interests.

The cabotage law of the Jones Act is not unique to the United States, either. The London-based Seafarers' Rights International released a study in 2018 listing more than 90 countries that have some type of cabotage law on their books. Maritime unions around the world have identified the Jones Act as the flagship of cabotage laws.

"This centennial is worth celebrating – and the Jones Act is worth fully preserving," proclaimed Sacco. "America's freight cabotage law has served us extremely well for a century, and that's why it has always enjoyed strong bipartisan support along with powerful backing from top military leaders."

"God bless the Jones Act, which I believe is the most 'All-American' law in existence."

## Legislators Issue Statements Backing Vital Maritime Law

Following are excerpts of statements issued by members of Congress in recognition of the Jones Act centennial.

**"The Jones Act has been and remains critical to supporting U.S. mariner jobs and our maritime industry, not to mention bolstering our national security. Over its 100-year history, the Jones Act has been critical in times of war, national emergencies and natural disasters, and global crises such as the current pandemic."**

--- U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon)

**"For 100 years, the Jones Act has been protecting Americans and our nation's waterways. Not only is Louisiana's First Congressional District number one in the country for Jones Act jobs, the Jones Act is a critical piece of America's national and economic security. At its heart, this law strengthens American naval capabilities, prevents foreign ships from roaming throughout our inland waterways, and protects our country from unknown foreign threats. The U.S. maritime industry is an important backbone of America's industrial base, and without the Jones Act, our maritime industry would be unfairly undercut by subsidized foreign entities. I will continue fighting to preserve the Jones Act so we can protect our national security, and to ensure these high-skilled, high-paying jobs remain in Louisiana and in America."**

--- U.S. Rep. Steve Scalise (R-Louisiana)

**"The Jones Act is an integral part of our Nation's success, and I am proud to recognize its longstanding contributions to our Nation and to advocate for its continued influence in the decades to come. The Jones Act has enhanced American prosperity and national security ever since its enactment on June 5, 1920. It puts America first over subsidized foreign shipbuilders and foreign vessel operators that do not pay U.S. taxes or comply with U.S. regulations. It continues to preserve our role as the world's leader in commerce and thousands of precious jobs for our American citizens. When it comes to the Jones Act, there is an overwhelming sense of pride from the American people, especially from Mississippians."**

--- U.S. Sen. Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-Mississippi)

**"The bedrock principles and protections of the Jones Act are as essential today as they were when the bill was passed a century ago. We are, at our core, a maritime nation. The U.S. Merchant Marine enables the country to project force anywhere around the globe and ensures the security of our waters at home. We cannot be complacent in our defense of the Jones Act, which remains a critical component of U.S. maritime and military strategy."**

--- U.S. Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-New York)

**"At its core, the Jones Act is a critical labor standard that helps put U.S. mariners to work and maintains important workplace rights. In Washington's Second Congressional District, the district I represent, the Jones Act supports 2,240 jobs which generate more than \$130 million in labor income and more than \$642 million in economic impact annually.... The Jones Act also underpins U.S. maritime defense policy and is essential to preserving national security interests at home and abroad."**

--- U.S. Rep. Rick Larsen (D-Washington)

**"This week, we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Jones Act and its century of fostering our domestic maritime industry and supporting our national security. Named in honor of its author, former Senator Wesley Jones, the Jones Act has helped provide economic benefits in times of peace and has safeguarded resources to expand our military maritime capacity for times of war. For the Department of Defense, maintaining a U.S.-flagged fleet is critical to ensuring we have sufficient U.S. sealift capacity, available at a moment's notice, to defend our nation.... Not only does the Jones Act support this vital national security requirement, it also provides an economic benefit to our nation."**

--- U.S. Rep. Filemon Vela (D-Texas)

# Retired Paul Hall Center Instructor Bernabe Pelingon Passes Away May 2 at 68

When Bernabe Pelingon finished a 20-year stint in the U.S. Navy in 1997, he earnestly considered an array of second careers.

But it didn't take long for him to choose the SIU. Pelingon joined the union and sailed for two years before becoming an instructor at the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education, located in Piney Point, Maryland. He taught at the school for nearly 20 years, mixing in some ongoing work as an active mariner, before retiring in late 2018.

Pelingon, known to all as Bernie, cited health concerns when he retired. He died May 2 at age 68.

"He was beloved by staff and students alike, and his influence can be seen on many people working in the deck department throughout the SIU," said Paul Hall Center Acting Vice President Tom Orzechowski. "He was around when I took my AB course and he was a sailor's sailor."

Stan Beck worked with Pelingon both in the armed forces and at the school.

"Bernie was one of my shipmates in the U.S. Navy," Beck recalled. "We were on the *USS Detroit* together and we were both at the Paul Hall Center (as instructors) for 20 years each. He loved teaching students and was everyone's mentor. He was always willing to help with anything we needed, and he will be

missed very much."

Another instructor, Tom Truitt, noted, "Bernie's best interest was always for the student. He was always looking to give the students the most beneficial information so they could succeed after they left the school. He was a wealth of knowledge and I knew if I had a question, he would answer it or know where to find the answer. I really enjoyed working with him, and he was a true professional."

Even after retirement, Pelingon lived on the secondary road leading to the school.

A native of the Philippines, Pelingon hailed from a family of educators. He received college degrees in nautical science and marine transportation and also secured his third mate's license.

In the Navy, he served as quartermaster first class, earning many decorations along the way in addition to working as an instructor.

In Piney Point, he became the school's lead instructor for able seamen – but he did far more than classroom work. Pelingon recruited other veterans to the school, both as students and instructors. He served as a peer tutor and mentor for upgraders, some of whom had English as a second language.

In his retirement letter, Pelingon said that working at the school "has been a wonderful experience, and I will cherish the memories."



## Officials Release Procedures For Requesting Absentee Ballots For Upcoming SIU Elections

Elections for the SIU Atlantic, Gulf, Lakes and Inland Waters are scheduled for later this year. As in past SIU election years, a comprehensive guide will be published in the *Seafarers LOG* prior to the balloting.

In the case of members eligible to vote who believe they will be at sea during the Nov. 1 through Dec. 31, 2020 voting period or who otherwise think they will need absentee ballots, absentee ballots will be available.

The SIU constitution ensures that members who are eligible to vote and who find themselves in this situation may vote. Procedures are established in the SIU constitution to safeguard the secret ballot election, including the absentee ballot process.

Here is the procedure to follow when requesting an absentee ballot:

1. Make the request in writing to the SIU office of the secretary-treasurer, 5201 Capital Gateway Drive, Camp Springs, MD 20746.

2. Include in the request the correct address where the absentee ballot should be mailed.

3. Send the request for an absentee ballot by registered or certified mail.

4. The registered or certified mail

envelope must be postmarked no later than midnight, Nov. 15, 2020 and must be received at 5201 Capital Gateway Drive, Camp Springs, MD 20746 no later than Nov. 25, 2020.

5. The secretary-treasurer, after confirming eligibility, will send by registered mail, return receipt requested, to the address designated in the request, a ballot, together with an envelope marked "Ballot" and a mailing envelope no later than Nov. 30, 2020.

6. Upon receiving the ballot and envelope, vote by marking the ballot. After voting the ballot, place the ballot in the envelope marked "Ballot." Do not write on the "Ballot" envelope.

7. Place the envelope marked "Ballot" in the mailing envelope which is imprinted with the mailing address of the bank depository where all ballots are sent.

8. Sign the mailing envelope on the first line of the upper left-hand corner. Print name and book number on the second line. The mailing envelope is self-addressed and stamped.

9. The mailing envelope must be postmarked no later than midnight, Dec. 31, 2020 and received by the bank depository no later than Jan. 5, 2021.



Bernabe Pelingon (left) was a fixture in Piney Point for nearly 20 years. He served as lead instructor in the deck department and also recruited for the school.

## USCG Waives MMC Fees For Active Duty Personnel

*Editor's note: The following information was issued by the U.S. Coast Guard on May 26. The announcement is posted on the SIU website, in the Latest News section, and includes all of the related links.*

The Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing has published CG-MMC Policy Letter 02-20 titled: Guidance on Waiver of Merchant Mariner Credential Application Fees for Active Duty

Members of the Uniformed Services.

Active duty members of the uniformed services are eligible for a waiver of fees for evaluation of an application for an MMC, the administration of an examination required for an endorsement, and for the issuance of an MMC. The waiver applies to members of the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marine Corps, Space Force, Coast Guard, and the commissioned corps of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the

Public Health Service.

This policy is available on the Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Credentialing policy website on the MMC Policy Webpage. It may also be accessed by selecting "Policy & Regulations" on the National Maritime Center's website.

Mariners and other interested parties should contact the Mariner Credentialing Program Policy Division at MMCPolicy@uscg.mil or (202) 372-2357 with any questions or feedback.

# MTD Calls for Justice for All

## AFL-CIO Pledges to Continue Fighting for Reforms

As demonstrations for just treatment of minorities spread across the country, two SIU-affiliated organizations spoke out in strong support of the peaceful protesters' goals – most if not all of which are shared by organized labor.

Many union members and their families were part of the grassroots mobilizations, often under the banner of Black Lives Matter.

Both the Maritime Trades Department (MTD) and the AFL-CIO responded not only to the rallies but also to the destruction that occurred at the AFL-CIO headquarters building late on May 31. Vandals damaged the building, which is directly across the street from the White House. They broke windows and set fires in the lobby.

SIU President Michael Sacco also serves as president of the MTD. The department's statement reads, "The Sisters and Brothers of MTD affiliates who crew U.S.-flag ships, who build U.S.-flag vessels, who work on U.S. docks, and who supply these American workers know the value of teamwork and working together. These members of our Port Councils and unions have marched, do march and will march when we witness and experience injustice. The death of George Floyd was uncalled for and only the latest. The call for justice is valid. We will continue to work to bring equality and justice for ALL Americans. It must happen.

"However, destruction solves nothing. Words mean little if there is no action. It is way past time for all Americans to realize that 'We, the People' needs to truly come to all – people of color, native Americans, immigrants seeking a better life.

"Unionism is solidarity. The MTD stands, marches and fights for solidarity – peaceful solidarity – for all."

George Perry Floyd Jr. was an African-American man who was killed by police during an arrest in Minneapolis on May 25. Protests in response to both Floyd's death, and more broadly to police violence against other black people, quickly spread across the United States and internationally.

On June 1, AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka issued the following statement: "My heart is heavy at the events of the past few days. I watched the video of George Floyd pleading for his life under the knee of a Minneapolis police officer. No person of conscience can hear Floyd's



Union members gather near AFL-CIO headquarters for a spontaneous demonstration June 8 in the nation's capital. (Photo courtesy Union Veterans Council)

cries for help and not understand that something is deeply wrong in America.

"What happened to George Floyd, what happened to Ahmaud Arbery, what happened to far too many unarmed people of color has happened for centuries. The difference is now we have cell phones. It's there for all of us to see. And we can't turn our heads and look away because we feel uncomfortable.

"Racism plays an insidious role in the daily lives of all working people of color. This is a labor issue because it is a workplace issue. It is a community issue, and unions are the community. We must and will continue to fight for reforms in policing and to address issues of racial and economic inequality.

"We categorically reject those on the fringes who are engaging in violence and destroying property. Attacks like the one on the AFL-CIO headquarters are senseless, disgraceful and only play into the hands of those who have oppressed workers of color for generations and detract from the peaceful, passionate protesters who are rightly bringing issues of racism to the forefront.

"But in the end, the labor movement is not a building. We are a living collection of

working people who will never stop fighting for economic, social and racial justice. We are united unequivocally against the forces of hate who seek to divide this nation for their own personal and political gain at our expense.

"We will clean up the glass, sweep away the ashes and keep doing our part to bring a better day out of this hour of darkness and despair.

"Today and always, the important work of the AFL-CIO continues unabated.

## U.S. Coast Guard Announces AB and Lifeboatman Surveys

Some SIU members soon may receive an email from the U.S. Coast Guard pertaining to a survey. The agency's announcement, dated June 11, appears below and is available on the SIU website (check the Latest News section).

### Able Seaman and Lifeboatman Surveys

The Coast Guard is seeking input from mariners who hold Merchant Mariner Credential endorsements as Able Seaman (AB) and Lifeboatman (LB) to validate information gathered as part of a Job Task Analysis (JTA).

Since 2016, the Coast Guard has been working on several initiatives to improve the quality of the content of credentialing examinations. One initiative is to validate the real-world occupational tasks carried out by mariners in today's merchant fleet by conducting JTAs. The first JTA is for AB and LB endorsements. We worked with members of industry with AB/LB experience to identify the tasks that AB and LB are responsible for while signed on a vessel. The Coast Guard is inviting you to be a part of this exciting and worthwhile effort by:

- Validating the AB and LB tasks.

- Telling us how frequently you complete the tasks.

- Telling us how difficult it is to complete the tasks.

- Telling us how important it is to complete the tasks.

This is a unique opportunity for you to provide insight into your job, either as an AB/LB or as a supervisor, and contribute to Coast Guard examination improvements. The Coast Guard will use the results of the JTA in consultation with industry to evaluate and update examination content for these endorsements.

Mariners who hold endorsements as AB and/or LB will receive an e-mail from JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil containing a link to the survey and the dates the survey is open. Your link to the survey will have a unique identifier to record your responses. It is not linked to you personally and the information you provide will remain anonymous. Your participation is encouraged for the benefit of the maritime community and safety of the Marine Transportation System.

If you have questions regarding the survey, please contact us at JobTaskAnalysis@uscg.mil.

### Aboard the Safmarine Mafadi



Recertified Steward Lauren Oram (right) reports that the galley gang aboard the Maersk Line, Limited vessel is quite busy keeping the ship sanitary. She's pictured with (from left) SA Claribel Cabral and Chief Cook Juan Poblete Inostroza.

# At Sea and Ashore with the SIU

**GOLDEN SHELLBACK** – Mariners aboard the Matson ship *M/V Kamokuiki* recently crossed the Equator and International Date Line, and then received a Golden Shellback certificate. SIU Steward/Baker Adele E. Williams is pictured fourth from left. The crew also includes (from the MM&P) Capt. Louis E. Terramorse, C/M Robert G. Abbott, 3/M Jessica N. Mastrella, (from the MEBA) 2/M Robert M. Womble, C/E Evan C. Haford, 1 A/E Glen K. Elliott, 2 A/E Lucas W. Frank, (from the SUP) Bosun Forrest A. Jackson, ABW Joshua S. Davis, ABW Christian G. Ortiz, ABW Richard N. Kahalewai Jr., AND (from the MFOV) Electrician Kevin L. Haymer and Oiler Walter J. Tangonan. Second Mate Womble is behind the lens.



**GUAM HALL** – Pictured prior to the pandemic are (photo at left, from left) ABG Octavio Henriques, OS Franklin Muna and Recertified Bosun Gregory Jackson. Muna was receiving his full B-book. The individual photo in the center shows QEP Richard Digman receiving his A-book, while the photo at right includes (from left) SIU Port Agent Fred Sanchez and MDR Donald Dabbs, also receiving his A-book.



**ABOARD USNS MAURY** – There are many Seafarers past and present among the engine crew aboard the Ocean Shipholdings vessel. (Note that the ship had been through two 14-day quarantine periods in the last two months and was deemed “clean,” hence the absence of social distancing and PPE for the photo at right.) Front and center are C/E Merrick Brow, an SIU hawsepiper, and Oiler Karl Morrow. Behind them, left to right, are 3A/E McCale Butto (Suny), 2A/E John Bimpong (SIU hawsepiper), Oiler Anias Stanford, Oiler Zach Cartwright, QMED Hermano Sillon, Storekeeper Michael Dupee and 1A/E Keith Bailey (SIU hawsepiper). Many thanks to Keith Bailey for the photo and info.



**HOUSTON HALL** – Chief Cook Jorrell Davis (left) receives his B-book. He’s pictured with Patrolman J.B. Niday.



**ABOARD MAHI MAHI** – Pictured aboard the Matson ship in mid-May (above, from left) are ACU John Canson, Chief Steward Ken Greenidge and Chief Cook Carmelo Dela Cruz. (Yes, we cheated and stitched two photos together.)



**OAKLAND HALL** – Members and port officials make the best of it May 15 as Seafarers stop by the hall to pick up shipping documents.





# SIU Delivers The Goods For Key Military Exercise

Six Seafarers-Crewed Vessels  
Mobilize for DEFENDER-Europe 20



SIU crewed vessels are part of a convoy Feb. 28 in the Atlantic. Pictured from left during the military exercise are the USNS Benavidez, MV Resolve and the guided-missile cruiser USS Vella. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Andrew Waters)



AB Glen McCullough (left) and Second Mate Edmun Scott (a member of the Seafarers-affiliated American Maritime Officers) man the bridge aboard the USNS Benavidez while the vessel is at sea Feb. 17. The Benavidez was underway in support of Agile Defender 2020, a maritime portion of Defender 2020. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta) In photo below, OS Ja' mall Whitaker Brickers stands bridge wing lookout aboard the Benavidez (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Jordan R. Bair). Part of what he sees (photo at immediate left) is the array of containers and other U.S. Army equipment that is staged on the vessel's top-side deck.



With the SIU crewed MV Endurance in the background, an M88 Recovery vehicle heads ashore at the port of Bremerhaven, Germany for Exercise DEFENDER-Europe 20. (NATO photo)

Five vessels assigned to the Maritime Security Program fleet, augmented by a Military Sealift Command Bob Hope-Class ship – all crewed by SIU members – earlier this year proved their value to national defense. They carried vital materiel for a branch of the country's armed forces during DEFENDER-Europe 20, an extensive military exercise designed to build strategic readiness by deploying a "combat credible" force to Europe in support of North American Treaty Organization and U.S. national defense strategy, according to the U.S. Army. (Segments of the exercise were ongoing at press time.)

The SIU crewed convoy (comprised of the MV Endurance, MV Resolve and MV Patriot, all operated by Tote Services; the Central Gulf Lines-operated MV Green Bay and MV Green Lake; and the U.S. Marine Management-operated USNS Benavidez) took center stage in what initially was billed as the largest deployment of troops from the United States to Europe in more than 25 years. The vessels and crews were charged with transporting Abrams tanks, armored personnel carriers, heavy machine guns, mortars and much more from the United States to Europe. An estimated 20,000 U.S. troops reportedly were slated to participate in the exercise.

This effort exercised the Army's ability to coordinate large-scale movements with allies. In response to the outbreak of the COVID-19 virus and recent guidance by the U.S. Secretary of Defense, however, the exercise was modified both in size and scope. By mid-March, all movement of personnel and equipment from the United States to Europe ceased. The health, safety and readiness of the U.S. military, civilians, and family members moved to the forefront.

Prior to the reset, the Army deployed approximately 6,000 soldiers from the United States to Europe including a division headquarters and an armored brigade combat team. The SIU crewed vessels at that point had transported more than 1.3 million square feet of materiel including approximately 9,000 vehicles and 3,000 other pieces of equipment from Army prepositioned stocks.

At press time, the Army announced that another component of DEFENDER-Europe 20, originally scheduled for May, will take place at Drawsko Pomorskie Training Area, Poland, June 5-19. "Exercises like DEFENDER-Europe 20 continue to demonstrate that NATO allies and partners stand stronger together and that the U.S. commitment to NATO is ironclad," the Army reported.

Meanwhile, the U.S. Merchant Marine helped the U.S. Military Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) demonstrate its ability to project strategic readiness through their support of the DEFENDER-Europe 20 exercise. SDDC personnel successfully moved more than 3,000 pieces of equipment through multiple seaports from the United States to Europe.

"Our commercial carriers and partners are key to our operations," said Maj. Gen. Stephen E. Farnen, SDDC commanding general.

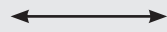


The SIU crewed roll-on/roll-off vessel MV Green Bay (photo above) arrives in Bremerhaven, Germany, to offload cargo for DEFENDER-Europe 20. The Green Bay transported more than 470 pieces of equipment across the Atlantic Ocean. (U.S. Navy photo by Travis Weger) Tracked vehicles (photo at immediate right) wait dockside to be loaded on the Seafarers-crewed MV Resolve in Beaumont, Texas. (U.S. Navy photo by Bill Mesta)



## Seafarers International Union Directory

Michael Sacco, President  
 Augustin Tellez, Executive Vice President  
 David Heindel, Secretary-Treasurer  
 George Tricker, Vice President Contracts  
 Tom Orzechowski,  
 Vice President Lakes and Inland Waters  
 Dean Corgey, Vice President Gulf Coast  
 Nicholas J. Marrone, Vice President West Coast  
 Joseph T. Soresi, Vice President Atlantic Coast  
 Kate Hunt, Vice President Government Services



### HEADQUARTERS

5201 Capital Gateway Drive  
 Camp Springs, MD 20746 (301) 899-0675

### ALGONAC

520 St. Clair River Dr., Algonac, MI 48001  
 (810) 794-4988

### ANCHORAGE

721 Sesame St., #1C, Anchorage, AK 99503  
 (907) 561-4988

### BALTIMORE

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 (410) 327-4900

### GUAM

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 Cliffline Office Ctr. Bldg., Suite 103B  
 422 West O'Brien Dr., Hagatna, Guam 96910  
 (671) 477-1350

### HONOLULU

606 Kalihi St., Honolulu, HI 96819  
 (808) 845-5222

### HOUSTON

625 N. York St., Houston, TX 77003  
 (713) 659-5152

### JACKSONVILLE

5100 Belfort Rd., Jacksonville, FL 32256  
 (904) 281-2622

### JERSEY CITY

104 Broadway, Jersey City, NJ 07306  
 (201) 434-6000

### JOLIET

10 East Clinton St., Joliet, IL 60432  
 (815) 723-8002

### MOBILE

1640 Dauphin Island Pkwy, Mobile, AL 36605  
 (251) 478-0916

### NEW ORLEANS

3911 Lapalco Blvd., Harvey, LA 70058  
 (504) 328-7545

### NORFOLK

115 Third St., Norfolk, VA 23510  
 (757) 622-1892

### OAKLAND

1121 7th St., Oakland, CA 94607  
 (510) 444-2360

### PHILADELPHIA

2604 S. 4 St., Philadelphia, PA 19148  
 (215) 336-3818

### PINEY POINT

45353 St. George's Avenue, Piney Point, MD  
 20674  
 (301) 994-0010

### PORT EVERGLADES

1221 S. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33316  
 (954) 522-7984

### SAN JUAN

659 Hill Side St., Summit Hills  
 San Juan, PR 00920  
 (787) 721-4033

### ST. LOUIS/ALTON

4581 Gravois Ave., St. Louis, MO 63116  
 (314) 752-6500

### TACOMA

3411 South Union Ave., Tacoma, WA 98409  
 (253) 272-7774

### WILMINGTON

510 N. Broad Ave., Wilmington, CA 90744  
 (310) 549-4000

## Inquiring Seafarer

*This month's question was answered by Tacoma-area members, via phone.*

### Question: What does it mean to you to be in The Brotherhood of the Sea?



**Ahmed Sharif**  
*QEE*

Being in the Seafarers has been the best thing that's ever happened to me. Job security, good pay, and it helps me support my family. Being in the union means I'll always have a job. Anytime I want to work, I'll have a job, and it's been that way my whole career. I've been in the union since 1997, and I feel blessed being a member of the SIU.



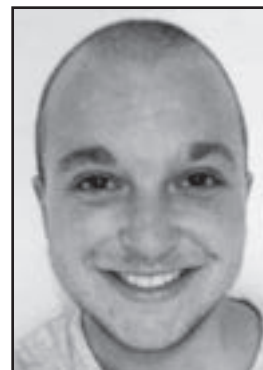
**Adel Ahmed**  
*Recertified Bosun*

It keeps us close together. You get to know new people every time you board the vessel, and you learn what different cultures have in common and what makes them different. My dad convinced me to join by telling me what the job was really like, what the lifestyle was like. I joined in 2001, and this job has let me take care of my kids, and earn money like you'd normally have to have a degree to make. Thanks to our union, and keep up the good work!



**Darryl Smith**  
*Recertified Bosun*

For one, it was the place that gave me an opportunity at 18 to start a good career. This line of business helps everyone in the country, as well as our military. It let me travel the world, meet new people, and gave me a clear career path that lets you move up as far as you want in life. I hope the union continues to bring in new mariners, and keep this industry thriving.



**Luke Coffelt**  
*OMU*

It means a sense of camaraderie, that we can rely on each other out at sea and ashore. It also provides a sense of security, that the union would have my back on a ship if I needed anything. The union gave me flexibility, way beyond what another job could. Being able to build my own schedule is a huge advantage in my life.



**Todd Williams**  
*QMED*

It means a lot. It presents a lot of opportunities to make a decent living and be a part of something that's really great. You get to meet some great people, and it means a lot to me. It changed my life, that's for sure, by being able to provide for my family and see a lot of different places around the world.



**Matthew Conyac**  
*Chief Steward*

It means that I've got a good union job and benefits available to me, and that we need to work on strengthening and growing our membership to keep the corporate and political interests that are against us, from endangering all we've worked to accomplish.

## Pics From The Past



These snapshots were submitted by the son of the late NMU Bosun John Ivo Valjalo. John joined the union in 1946, first serving on the *SS Bartlesville Victory* as deck maintenance. He remained with the union until 1985. John passed away peacefully in December 2015 in Liverpool, England, at age 92. Photo at right was taken aboard the *SS Tyson Lykes* during a 1959 voyage from Liverpool to Florida. The other is from Marseilles, France, January 1946.

*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 Capital Gateway Drive, Camp Springs, MD 20746. Photographs will be returned, if so requested. High-resolution digital images may be sent to [webmaster@seafarers.org](mailto: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

### PAUL ADAMS

Brother Paul Adams, 69, joined the Seafarers International Union in 1979, initially sailing on the *Pacer*. He was a deck department member and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Adams most recently sailed on the *John U.D. Page*. He makes his home in Cocoa Beach, Florida.

### AL ALHAJ

Brother Al Alhaj, 65, started sailing with the union in 1979 when he shipped on the *Brooks Range*. A member of the deck department, he last sailed on the *John Boland*. Brother Alhaj settled in Lincoln Park, Michigan.



### TOMMY BELVIN

Brother Tommy Belvin, 70, signed on with the SIU in 1978 when he sailed aboard the *Santa Mercedes*. He was a member of the steward department and upgraded often at the Piney Point school. Brother Belvin's final vessel was the *Maunalei*. He makes his home in Tacoma, Washington.



### URSULA CANCI

Sister Ursula Canci, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1996, initially shipping on the *Silas Bent*. An engine department member, she upgraded her skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Sister Canci last sailed on the *USNS Stockham*. She resides in Staten Island, New York.

### LEONARD CHAVIS

Brother Leonard Chavis, 66, started his career with the union in 2004, first sailing aboard the *Delaware Bay*. He was a member of the engine department and most recently shipped on the *Ohio*. Brother Chavis makes his home in Port Arthur, Texas.

### NICK CIABATONI

Brother Nick Ciabatoni, 69, embarked on his career with the SIU in 2001. He first sailed aboard the *Cape Inscription*, and worked in the deck department. Brother Ciabatoni upgraded at the Piney Point school in 2012. He last shipped on the *Alaskan*



*Navigator* and calls St. Augustine, Florida, home.

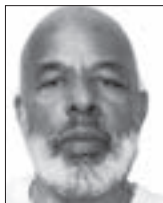
### STEVEN DICKSON

Brother Steven Dickson, 66, signed on with the Seafarers in 1991, when he sailed on the *USNS Wilkes*. He was a steward department member and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Dickson most recently sailed aboard the *Maersk Seletar*. He resides in Bremerton, Washington.



### JEROME DOOMS

Brother Jerome Dooms, 63, joined the SIU in 1989, first sailing aboard the *Dewayne T. Williams*. He was an engine department member and upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. Brother Dooms last sailed on the *St. Louis Express* and settled in Houston.



### JOSEPH HUMPHREY

Brother Joseph Humphrey, 58, started shipping with the union in 1991, initially sailing on the *Frances Hammer*. He upgraded on numerous occasions at the Paul Hall Center and sailed in the deck department. Brother Humphrey's final vessel was the *Maersk Memphis*. He lives in Honolulu.



### MICHAEL INGRAM

Brother Michael Ingram, 65, joined the union in 1973. He was a member of the deck department and first sailed aboard the *Falcon Lady*. Brother Ingram upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. He most recently shipped on the *Overseas Washington* and settled in Klickitat, Washington.

### NORMAN JACKSON

Brother Norman Jackson, 54, donned the SIU colors in 1989 when he sailed with Delta Queen Steamboat Company. A steward department member, he upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Jackson's final vessel was the *American Phoenix*. He makes his home in Marrero, Louisiana.

### GREGORY KEENE

Brother Gregory Keene, 61, signed on with the union in 1978, first sailing on the *Great Land*. He upgraded on multiple oc-

casions at the union-affiliated Piney Point school and was a steward department member. Brother Keene's last ship was the *Maersk Michigan*. He resides in the Philippines.



### CHARLES KENNEDY

Brother Charles Kennedy, 73, joined the union in 1975, initially sailing aboard the *Yukon*. He worked in the engine department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Kennedy most recently sailed aboard the *Overseas Key West* and lives in Mobile, Alabama.



### PETER MENSAH

Brother Peter Mensah, 71, began shipping with the union in 2003 when he sailed aboard the *Global Link*. He worked in both the steward and deck departments. Brother Mensah last shipped on the *Dependable* and resides in Willingboro, New Jersey.



### MARIANO NORALES

Brother Mariano Norales, 65, embarked on his career with the Seafarers in 1990, first sailing on the *Independence*. He sailed in the steward department and upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on several occasions. Brother Norales' last vessel was the *Quality*. He makes his home in Houston.



### AMELIA OCAMPO

Sister Amelia Ocampo, 65, signed on with the SIU in 2000. She initially sailed aboard the *USNS Giliand* and shipped in both the steward and deck departments. Sister Ocampo upgraded at the Piney Point school on multiple occasions. She most recently sailed on the *Resolve* and makes her home in Jacksonville, Florida.



### ROCKY OLDS

Brother Rocky Olds, 65, joined the Seafarers International Union in 1999. He was an engine department member and



upgraded at the Paul Hall Center on numerous occasions. Brother Olds' first and last vessel was the *USNS Dahl*. He makes his home in San Marcos, California.

### JOSE RAMIREZ

Brother Jose Ramirez, 65, started sailing with the union in 1990 when he shipped on the *Independence*. A member of the engine department, he upgraded often at the Piney Point school. Brother Ramirez last sailed on the *Florida* and settled in Houston.



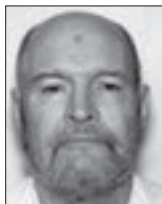
### KASSIM SHAIBI

Brother Kassim Shaibi, 65, signed on with the SIU in 1979 when he sailed aboard the *Trader*. He was a member of the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on numerous occasions. Brother Shaibi's final vessel was the *Liberator*. He makes his home in Shafter, California.



### ROBERT SHAW

Brother Robert Shaw, 65, began sailing with the Seafarers in 1976, initially shipping with National Marine Service. A deck department member, he upgraded his skills at the Paul Hall Center on multiple occasions. Brother Shaw last sailed on the *Pride* and resides in Rockaway, New Jersey.



### MICHAEL SPRANZA

Brother Michael Spranza, 65, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1980 when he sailed aboard the *San Juan*. He worked in the deck department and upgraded at the Piney Point school on several occasions. Brother Spranza last shipped on the *Reliance*. He calls Daly City, California, home.



### TIMOTHY VAN PELT

Brother Timothy Van Pelt, 61, signed on with the Seafarers in 1978, when he sailed on the *Overseas Ulla*. He was an engine department member and upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. Brother Van Pelt most



recently sailed with Moran Towing of Maryland. He resides in Sparrows Point, Maryland.

### BRIAN WILDER

Brother Brian Wilder, 64, joined the SIU in 1991, first sailing aboard the *Cape Bon*. He was an engine department member and upgraded at the Piney Point school on numerous occasions. Brother Wilder last sailed on the *American Pride* and settled in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida.

## GREAT LAKES

### THOMAS CHABOT

Brother Thomas Chabot, 65, started shipping with the union in 1973, initially sailing on the *Paul H. Townsend*. A deck department member, his final vessel was the *Charles E. Wilson*. Brother Chabot lives in Lachine, Michigan.



### LARRY SKOWRONEK

Brother Larry Skowronek, 64, started his career with the union in 1990, first sailing aboard the *Walter J. McCarthy*. He upgraded at the Piney Point school on numerous occasions and was a member of the deck department. Brother Skowronek's final vessel was the *Burns Harbor*. He makes his home in Alpena, Michigan.

## INLAND

### CHARLIE CARLSON

Brother Charlie Carlson, 64, embarked on his career with the SIU in 1998. He was first employed with Penn Maritime and sailed in the deck department. Brother Carlson upgraded often at the Paul Hall Center. He last sailed on the *Resolve* and lives in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.



### GARY DAVIS

Brother Gary Davis, 66, signed on with the SIU in 1977, working with HVIDE Marine. He sailed in the deck department and concluded his career with G&H Towing. Brother Davis makes his home in Graves, Texas.





## ITF Secures Back Pay, Repatriation For Mariners Stranded by Company

After five months of being detained and abandoned, the crew of the Liberian-flagged *M/V Evolution* has finally been paid their due wages, and those who wished to be repatriated were sent home, thanks to the International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF).

The 505-foot, runaway-flag cargo vessel was first detained by the U.S. Marshals Service on Jan. 31, after it arrived off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina. The vessel was abandoned by an overseas maritime firm called Smooth Navigation, which stranded the 21 mariners on board, waiting to receive the \$355,000 in back pay they were owed.

The crew, 19 from the Philippines, one Jordanian officer and one Lebanese officer, continued to perform their duties on the ship while being detained. Without the proper immigration documents, they were unable to leave the vessel and enter the United States.

The vessels' insurers demanded that the *Evolution* be put on the auction block to pay for a shipment of iron that was damaged by saltwater as the vessel sailed to Indonesia from Iran. They sought to recoup \$1.45 million from the sale of the vessel.

The *Evolution* is the first major vessel abandonment in the United

States since crew abandonment insurance was created in 2018, according to ITF Inspector Corey Connor.

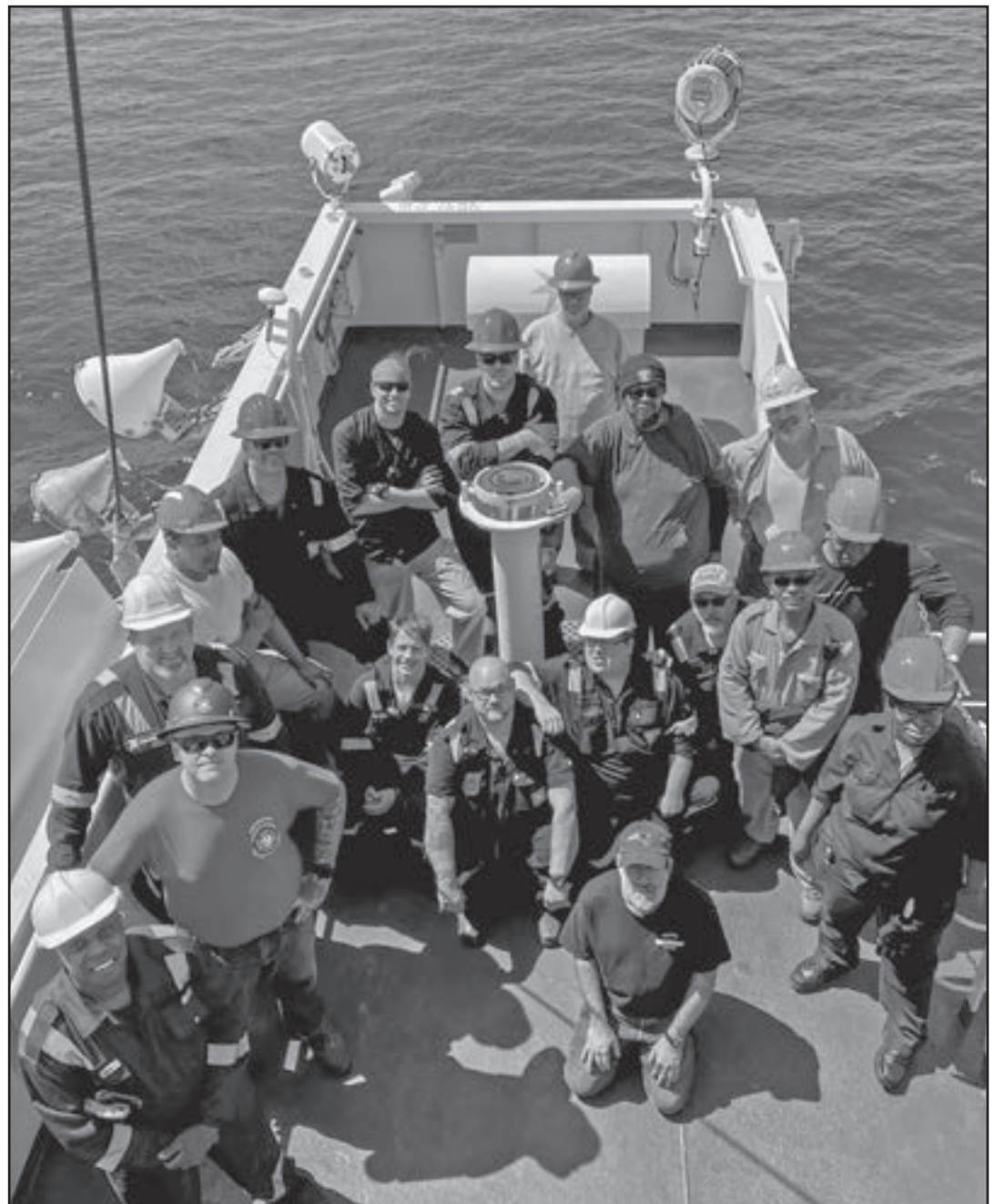
"It does happen. It's not uncommon, especially around the world, but it's very uncommon in the United States," said Connor.

He added that the vessel was finally sold at auction in May for two main reasons: "One, the vessel is abandoned, so there's currently nobody taking responsibility for it. So, the vessel needs to be sold to a new company. The second part of that is getting the crew paid. The crew hadn't been paid in four months, so we were able to get everyone to agree to pay the crew with the money earned from the sale of the vessel."

The crew was partially repatriated on June 13, and the 19 Filipino crewmembers were allowed to return home. The officers chose to stay on board until the new owners take control of the vessel, and Connor was informed in a message from the crew that this was the "good ending" they had hoped for. The full amount of the wages owed to the mariners was on the way as of press time.

The SIU is an ITF affiliate; SIU Secretary-Treasurer David Heindel serves as chair of the ITF Seafarers' Section.

## Aboard Maersk Idaho



This pre-pandemic photo was taken much earlier in the year. That's Paul Hall Center instructor John Thomas near the bottom left, hands on hips and wearing a dark hardhat. He visited the ship in order to help update the school's fire fighting curriculums. (Nothing bad happened on the *Idaho*. Thomas was just taking general notes.)



Grateful crew members are pictured with ITF Inspector Corey Connor (wearing face covering).

## 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.

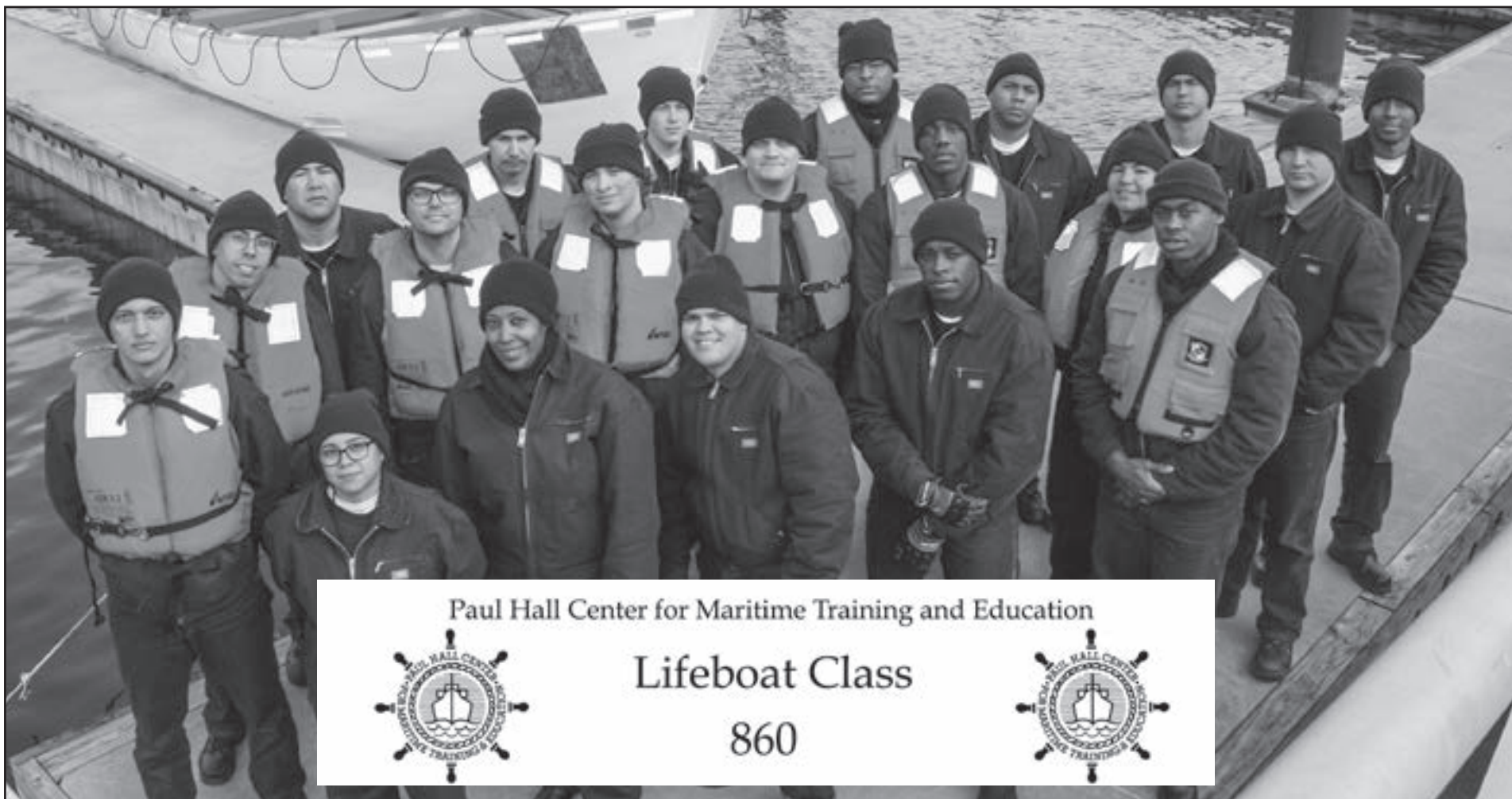
**SEAFARERS POLITICAL ACTIVITY**

**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



Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education  
**Lifeboat Class**  
**860**

**Apprentice Water Survival Class #860** – Graduated February 21 (above, in alphabetical order): David Argo, Tina Brown, Isaiah Cabral, Gregory Castor, Jonte Crenshaw, Dylan Jones, Raheem Joseph, Gabriel Kalima, Jocecil Lugo-Rivera, Jose Pena, Julianne Perez-Borroto, William Place, Ricardo Ramos-Rodriguez, Tyson Richardson, Gabriel Rivera, Julian Rubbo, Makanaonalani Sing, Tyseen Tolbert, Eddie Verrett Jr. and Jeffery Wixted.



**RFPNW** – Graduated April 17 (above): Willie Smith Jr.



**Radar Observer** – Graduated March 13 (above, in alphabetical order): Diego Fernando Barbosa, David Brusco, Carlo Mateo Gentile, Jason James and Ahmed Mohamed Mohamed Eissa. Class instructor Brian Moore is at the far left.



**UA to AS-D** – Graduated March 13 (above, in alphabetical order): Sharde Baker, Robert Coleman III, Norman Routier Comeaux Jr., Michael Curtin, Kendall Davis, Christopher Eke, Carey Floyd, Antonio Manuel Gonzalez-Estevés, Michael Hickey, Nicholas Holt, Jackson McDaniel, Anthonie Nichols, Velislav Nikolov, Lane Plummer, Tyler Thompson and Mervin Zamora.

# Paul Hall Center Classes



**RFPNW (Phase III)** – Graduated April 17 (photo at left, in alphabetical order): Bryan Aleman Medina, Daniel Bost, Jessina Fernandez, Marck Mathias Hilgendorf-Sanchez, Ricardo Jose Valenzuela-Venegas and James Zaro. Upon the completion of their training, each plans to work in the deck departments of SIU-contracted vessels.



**Government Vessels** – Graduated March 20: Charles Crawford (above left) and Manuel Lata Jr. Also graduating, but not pictured was Latosha Love.



**BAPO (Phase III)** – Graduated April 17 (above, in alphabetical order): Nathan Johnson Jr., Gregory Nash, Jorge Gerardo Valencia Bon and Ronald Von Kaenel. Each plans to work in the engine departments of union-crewed vessels upon the completion of their training.



**Junior Engineer** – Graduated March 6 (above, in alphabetical order): Joel Boyd, Caleb Donovan, Paul Hudgins, Jacob Laroche, Tyriq Mills, Re'sean Peters, Dontrell Riddick, Andy Salado, Maksim Shpylyevyy, Daniel Lowie Rivera Surell and Kevin Willis. Class instructor Christopher Morgan is at the far left.



# Paul Hall Center Classes

**Junior Engineer** – Graduated March 20 (photo at right, in alphabetical order): Eduardo Arroyo, Justin Bodnar, Charles Collins III, Tom Dary, Francois Doucet III, Mark Feldhaus, Cody Fox, Thedford Jones Jr., Joshua Kraynak, Daniel Jaim Leon-Bruges, Ethan Love and Gabriel Santa Ramos. Class instructor Roy Graham is at the far right.



**Basic Training (Advanced Firefighting Revalidation)** - Graduated March 13 (photo at left, in alphabetical order): Julian Avila, Annie Bivens, Juan Alberto Lima, Martin Malia, Joseph Mesyna, Raymond Crestus Oglesby and Thomas Paytosh. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



**FOWT** – Graduated March 20 (above, in alphabetical order): Reny Arzu, Marco Antonio Baez Millan, James Bithos Jr., Anthony Brown, Michael Day Jr., Mark Dennison, Keilah Keturah Israel Freeman, Lorenz Ronal Grice, Carlos Marcos Gutierrez, Deandre Henry, Kalanihoolumoku Holt, Roman Hutson, Cale Irons, Tony King Jr., Alika Matthew Kawika Kukahiko, Jack Lanier, Billy Sawyer III, Delson Smith, Anias Stanford, Neil Laconsay Tupas and Daniel Villarruel

# Paul Hall Center Classes



**Basic Firefighting** – Graduating from this class February 21 and February 28, respectively, were upgraders Jeremy Blake (above) and Willie Smith Jr. (below).



**Basic Training (Basic Firefighting)** – Graduated March 6 (above, in alphabetical order): Gamaladin Hamood Al-Gazzaly, Garrett Allen, Velma Clarke, Rasim Jasiqi, Joseph Jones, Manuel Lata Jr., Matthew Troyer, Robert Varney, Dominic Washington and Ismail Salim Yahya.



**Galley Ops (Phase III)** – Graduated April 17: Sophia Lewis (above). Upon the completion of her training, she plans to work in the steward department aboard union-contracted vessels.



**Certified Chief Cook (Module 5)** – Graduated March 6 (above, in alphabetical order): Carlos Colon De Jesus, Alexander Emrick, Supattara Inthapanti, Jose Luis Medina, Lekesha Stevenson and Philip Anthony Villafior Zulueta.



**Advanced Galley Ops** – Graduated March 13 (above, in alphabetical order): Stclair Browne Jr., Shawn Cox, Charles Crawford, Latosha Love, Adele Mba Messina and Marquisha Simmons. (Note: Not all are pictured.)



**Certified Chief Cook (Module 1)** – Graduated March 20: Sharon McNeal (above).

# SEAFARERS LOG

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

**Text "Join" to 97779  
To Sign Up for SIU  
Text Alerts**

## SIU Delivered During World War II

*Editor's note: This is the third installment 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. The first two installments were published in the May and June LOGs, respectively, and are available on the SIU website. This one picks up aboard the SIU-crewed *Clare*, which had been hit by a torpedo. Crew members had also just seen another SIU-crewed vessel, the *Elizabeth*, get hit by a torpedo.*

That was a sobering thought and they pulled for the shore. It took about 15 minutes for the *Clare* to sink and they watched her settle, silhouetted against the tropic sky. No men were lost on the *Clare*.

Not so fortunate were other SIU ships that are now rustling many fathoms under the surface in the lightless depths of the Caribbean and the Gulf.

Of the hundreds of men lost on SIU ships in World War II a large percentage made supreme sacrifice in these waters that looked so calm and peaceful, yet comprised one of the most hazardous sectors of the war.

It was oil and bauxite, the two prime essentials of modern war, that lured the U-boats to the Caribbean in the first place. The tankers and the bauxite ships were their number-one targets, but they also sank anything else that came along. In the first six months of 1942, the subs shelled or torpedoed anything that steamed their way, without fear or favor.

One of several bauxite-laden ships to get sliced with a tin fish in these waters was the little *SS Suwied* under command of the Captain Bernard David. She was off the south coast of Cuba bound for Mobile with aluminum ore when, on June 7, a torpedo exploded in her starboard side and she went to the bottom in just 1-½ minutes! Not many ships beat her record for sinking.

Water and debris shot up the funnel as the boilers exploded and First Mate John Hume, one of the last to leave the plummeting ore carrier, walked off the deck in water over his shoulders after releasing the forward life rafts.

The sub that torpedoed them surfaced nearby and watched the troubles the men had with their leaky lifeboats, but the Germans did not interfere in any way and the 27 survivors were picked up the next day by a Navy patrol vessel.

It is pertinent to note in this regard that there were only one or two instances in all the sinkings in the Caribbean where submarine crews mistreated torpedoed men from American ships. In many cases they even gave the survivors water, bread and cigarettes, offered medical aid when needed, and gave the officers a course to the nearest land.

A close competitor to the *Suwied* for the title of "the fastest sinking ship" was the *Alcoa Pilgrim*, which was torpedoed without warning early in the morning of May 28 while en route from Port of Spain, Trinidad, to Mobile with 9,500 tons of heavy bauxite aboard. She sank by the stern in a little over 90 seconds, with heavy loss of life.

### No Time For SOS

This blacked-out, SIU-crewed freighter had three lookouts on watch, and was zig-zagging when the unseen U-boat sent



Enrollees from across the country arrive at the United States Maritime Service training station at Sheepshead Bay, New York, in the early 1940s.

a torpedo into her engine room on the starboard side just below the water line. Needless to say, there was no time to send out an SOS and no time to fire any guns even if the ship had been armed.

The *Alcoa Pilgrim* plunged so quickly no boats could be launched, but nine survivors got aboard two life rafts which drifted clear and were picked up a week later by the *SS Thomas Nelson*.

As was usual in sinkings of unarmed ships steaming alone, the sub surfaced, came up to the survivors, and questioned them about the ship and cargo. The U-boat was a big one, and bore the insignia of a ram's head on her conning tower. After questioning the *Pilgrim's* men, she steamed calmly away on the surface looking for more victims.

Truly it can be said that the Caribbean in 1942 was a "U-Boat Lake."

### 60 Seconds To Sink

Although U-boats liked best to bag a bauxite ship or a tanker, because these cargoes were so vital to the war effort, they weren't at all choosy about their targets – and molasses tankers got sunk as well as more "vital" prey during the war in the Caribbean and the Gulf in 1942.

The *SS Catahoula* of the Cuba Distilling Company, a favorite among SIU men who liked the seniorita run, was hit on April 5, to be followed by its sister ship the *SS Carrabelle* on May 26.

There was a full load of molasses in the tanks of the *Catahoula*, as she stood north from San Pedro de Macoris, Dominican Republic, toward Wilmington, Del., in the late afternoon of a warm clear day over a lazy, beautiful sea.

Two men were on lookout, but they couldn't see the sub waiting for them against the glare of the setting sun. The first torpedo hit on the port side in a terrific blast that blew up the deck plates, loosened

the engine room bulkheads and carried away the catwalk.

### Pitched Battle

Being one of the first ships equipped in some fashion to fight back against the sub, the general alarm was sounded; and a complement of Navy gunners manned their machine guns so well that the inquisitive sub had its periscope shot away – or so it seemed from the deck of the tanker.

Not a bit daunted by the prospect of fighting a raider with .30 caliber pellets, the gun crew fired away till they consumed 200 rounds.

But four minutes later after the first torpedo, the sub let them have another, which found its mark forward of the bridge to starboard – showing that the wary U-boat had made a quick circuit around the ship for its second try.

After this hit, the *Catahoula* lost no time going down, and was under water fore and aft in little more than 60 seconds.

Two of the crew had been killed in the first blast, and five more were crushed when the stack fell athwart the starboard lifeboat.

One lifeboat and one raft on the port side got away safely and, thanks to Sparks having stuck by his post to get off four calls for help, 38 survivors were rescued the next day by the *USS Sturtevant*.

Heroism of the Radio Operator and the tragic death of the Skipper and 23 men marked the sinking of the *Carrabelle*, which tried bravely to escape from a U-boat on the night of May 26, while en route from Good Hope, La., to San Juan, Puerto Rico, with a cargo of emulsified liquid asphalt.

The first they knew of a U-boat's presence was the moan of a siren and a crack of a shot across the bow.

### Close Range

In a moment or two, they saw the raider

little more than a ship's length off the beam, where it opened fire on them with a light gun, throwing shell after shell into the defenseless tanker while the general alarm summoned all hands to the boats and the order was given to abandon ship.

They lowered away as the nearby U-boat moved around to the port side and opened fire again, the shells hitting in rapid succession against deck house and bridge.

As the first boat pulled away from the ship's side, the U-boat commander hailed them from the conning tower.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

They shouted "no" – that another boat was still preparing to cast off. They heard several men laughing on the raider's deck, even while a second torpedo streaked past them and headed for the lifeboat that was just now shipping its oars beside the sinking *Carrabelle*.

The men in the boat probably never saw the torpedo till it was all but on top of them, and then there was only time for a startled cry or two.

The steel tube bulleted through the lifeboat, and hit the steel hull of the tanker in an explosion that stifled all cries or shouts for help, blowing boat and men into myriad torn pieces of human bodies and flying steel.

It was one of the few known cases in which German submarines deliberately attacked lifeboat occupants from American ships.

### Six SOS Calls

Before the *Carrabelle* sank, Sparks managed to get out six SOS calls, then ran out of the radio shack onto the flooded deck and jumped overboard just as she went under.

Brave were the men who volunteered to

*Continued on Page 9*