

MARINE ENGINEERS' BENEFICIAL ASSOCIATION (AFL-CIO)



"On Watch in Peace and War since 1875"
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NTSB PROBE OF BALTIMORE BRIDGE DISASTER

The National Transportation Safety Board has begun its investigation of the collision that destroyed Baltimore's four-lane Francis Scott Key Bridge early Tuesday in a disaster that claimed at least six lives. Two workers were rescued from the water, one with severe injuries. It is believed that the Singaporean-flag 984-foot containership M/V DALI lost both engine and electrical power shortly after it left the Port of Baltimore. Sources believe the diesel backup generator kicked in and electrical systems were restored, but with propulsion gone, the vessel barreled into a bridge support structure at about 7-8 knots. 30 seconds later the bridge folded into the Patapsco River. The bodies of two of the six nightshift construction workers believed to be on the bridge were recovered on Wednesday in a submerged truck. Reports indicate the other four could be in vehicles that plunged into the Patapsco but are covered in bridge debris. The crew, which consisted of mostly Indian nationals and included two harbor pilots (including an apprentice), were uninjured. The NTSB confirmed that the pilot's emergency call to transit authorities to close the bridge moments before the collapse may have prevented additional deaths. The DALI is owned by the Singapore-based Grace Ocean Private Ltd. and was being chartered by Danish shipping giant Maersk. The NTSB updated the press yesterday and released an initial timeline of the March 26th incident:

- **12:39 am** - Dali container ship departs from Seagirt Marine Terminal.
- **1:07 am** - The ship enters Fort McHenry Channel.
- **1:24:59 am** - Audible alarms recorded on ship's bridge audio. Voyage data recorder (VDR) stops recording vessel's system data.
- **1:26:02 am** - VDR resumes recording after glitch. Steering commands captured on audio.
- **1:26:39 am** - Pilot requests assistance from nearby tugboats. Pilot association dispatcher notifies Maryland Transportation Authority (MDTA) duty officer about blackout.
- **1:27:04 am** - Pilot orders port anchor dropped and issues steering commands.
- **1:27:25 am** - Pilot reports loss of power and approaching bridge. Transit authority duty officer orders traffic shutdown.
- **1:29 am** - Ship's speed recorded just under 8 mph. VDR records collision sounds. MDTA dash cameras capture bridge lights going out.
- **1:29:39 am** - Pilot reports to US Coast Guard that the bridge is down.

NTSB noted that some of the 56 containers carrying 764 tons of hazardous material aboard the ship had been breached in the incident and hazmat teams were on scene. There has been rampant speculation on the cause of the incident including “dirty fuel,” but NTSB acknowledged their investigation into the incident could take as long as 12 to 24 months. The incident forced the suspension of vessel traffic in and out of the port although trucking operations continue.

The M.E.B.A. expressed concern for the victims in this disaster and praised the responders who leapt into action immediately. A statement from the Union noted, “As we await a formal investigation from the NTSB, we are soberly reminded of the cruel phrase in our industry that ‘rules are written in blood.’ This unfortunate incident highlights the need for strong safety standards in the global maritime industry that fall short of those in the U.S. Merchant Marine. While we continue to learn more about what happened on this tragic day, all global ship operators must avoid future accidents contributed by poor working and operating standards that utilize minimum crewing for profit at the expense of human life and safety.”

Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg urged the federal government to “tear down any barriers, bureaucratic as well as financial” that could slow down the rebuilding of the bridge. “Rebuilding will not be quick, or easy or cheap, but we will get it done,” the Secretary told reporters on Wednesday.

The Port of Baltimore is a significant hub for both imports and exports, handling a variety of goods including autos, light trucks, farm machinery, and commodities like sugar, gypsum, and coal. The closure and subsequent rerouting of shipments are expected to cause disruptions to supply chains, potentially leading to increased transportation costs and delays. The closure of the port adds to existing challenges in ocean freight services, such as the drought in the Panama Canal and security concerns in the Red Sea.

M.E.B.A. Secretary-Treasurer Roland Rexha said that foreign-owned companies should better invest in their ship crews and upgrade vessel safety to avoid incidents like this one. U.S.-flag vessels are subjected to much more stringent inspection and safety standards than overseas ships, and licensing and credentialing requirements for American mariners is at a higher level than their foreign counterparts. Rex told *The Guardian*, “These types of issues can be averted when you have a highly trained crew and you have the resources for the crew to be able to operate,” he said. “But these companies, what they do is they’re looking to make as much profit as they can, and they put their workforce in a position to fail on a daily basis...Between the train derailment in East Palestine, Ohio, and what’s happened recently with Boeing - obviously, we’ve seen corporate greed at its worst, and the maritime industry is actually probably the worst offender.”

ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS GO TO WORK IN BALTIMORE

M.E.B.A. Engine Officers working in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers fleet are on hand in Baltimore following the Key Bridge collapse. USACE Baltimore District cleared the way for more than 1,100 engineering, construction, contracting and operations specialists to provide support to local, state and federal agencies. The Corps will lead the effort to clear the Federal channel as part of the larger interagency recovery effort. They are providing underwater assessment capabilities and structural engineering support. Fleet mariners are heading up waterway debris management and the USACE debris removal vessel REYNOLDS is providing support.

The 61-foot survey vessel CATLETT is performing hydrographic and topographic surveying and additional Corps vessels are ready to join efforts as needed for waterway debris management.

GREEN OCEAN STATESIDE ON MAIDEN VOYAGE

Waterman hosted a ceremony in the Port of Baltimore on Monday to celebrate the maiden voyage of the newbuild GREEN OCEAN, a Japanese-built car carrier that replaces the aging GREEN RIDGE.

M.E.B.A. representatives were in attendance at the ceremony that also drew a strong showing from the Maritime Administration including Maritime Administrator Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, as well as Waterman Logistics President Henry Nuzum, Maryland Port Administration Executive Director Jonathan Daniels and USTRANSCOM Deputy Commander Lt. Gen. John P. Sullivan. Officials and staff from each of the unions representing mariners aboard the Seacor/Waterman vessel (M.E.B.A., MM&P, & SIU) also took part in the ceremony and subsequent ship tour. M.E.B.A. Gulf Coast V.P. Adam Smith participated and visited with Engine Officers following the ceremony.

M.E.B.A.'s Ted Jacobites is the Chief Engineer on the GREEN OCEAN with Joseph McElhinney III serving as the permanent 1st A/E.

The 655.8-foot vessel, that will carry both commercial and military cargo, has 12 decks and can hold almost 7,000 vehicles. It features a Mitsui-MAN B&W 7S60ME-C10.6-EGRBP engine with a right-handed single screw propeller. The ship assumed the Maritime Security Program slot previously held by the GREEN RIDGE.

Of interest, the ceremony took place at the dock on Monday afternoon in full view of the ill-fated containership M/V DALI which was loading up at the Seagirt Terminal. The GREEN OCEAN safely and efficiently left the port around 1500 bound for Charleston to load military equipment. The DALI didn't fare as well.

LNG BUNKER OBSERVATION OPPORTUNITY, APRIL 1

The Matson vessel DANIEL K. INOUYE will be doing LNG transfer operations at Pier A in LA/LB on April 1, 2024 from approximately 0600-1500.

A total of 10 slots are available for Engineers holding the LNG Basic STCW V/3-1 endorsement in their MMC to get credit for observing an LNG transfer.

Anyone eligible and interested should email LA Branch Agent Rich Doherty rdoherty@mebaunion.org before 1600 PDT Wednesday March 27 including their names as they appear on their MMC, MMC Reference number, and copy (jpeg or pdf) of the LNG Basic STCW V/3-1 endorsement in their MMC. Slots are available on a first come first served basis.

LNG-RELATED TRAINING OPPORTUNITY IN LA/LB – APRIL 29 – MAY 3

Matson is contracting with IECEX to conduct USCG/IMO IECEX training for LNG Vessel Maintenance and Performance training at the Courtyard Downtown Marriott in Long Beach. The initial scope of the IMO/USCG IECEX requirement is that “any personnel [on LNG vessels] that should carry out inspections and maintenance of electrical installations in explosion hazardous spaces should be qualified pursuant to IEC 60079-17, item 4.2., as described in the CG-ENG Policy

Letter No.01-12, CH-1". For M.E.B.A., this would include Chief Engineers and 1st Assistant Engineers.

A total of 10 seats are available on a first come first serve basis to interested MEBA 1AEs and CEs who already have the Advanced IGF (LNG) code operations endorsement in their MMC. Eligible interested candidates should email LA Branch Agent Rich Doherty rdoherty@mebaunion.org by 1600 PDT April 14, 2024. include the following information in the email: phone number, copy of MMC showing CE or 1AE license and advanced IGF (LNG) code operations endorsement, copy of passport or drivers license (front and back). Class will meet 0800-1700 daily. Class tuition, box lunches, and refreshments will be provided. Travel and housing expenses will not be covered.

UPCOMING HOLIDAY CLOSINGS; GOOD FRIDAY, CHAVEZ, CALHOON DAYS

Union halls and offices will be closed tomorrow (3/29) for Good Friday. Officials and some staffers can still be reached by cellphone and email during the lead-in to Easter weekend. West Coast M.E.B.A. Union halls will be closed on Monday, April 1 to observe labor giant Cesar Chavez's birthday. Chavez was an American farm worker, labor leader and civil rights activist. He was known for his use of non-violent tactics and made the farm workers' struggle a moral cause and gained nationwide support. His family lost their farm in Arizona during the Great Depression and he moved to California and became a migrant farm worker facing much adversity during those 14 years. In 1952, he became an organizer and effective voice for the Community Service Organization, a civil rights group. Four years after becoming the CSO Director, he left the organization and along with Dolores Huerta, co-founded the National Farm Workers Association, which later became the United Farm Workers. He led his union on a series of strikes and work actions that led to extraordinary gains and protections for farm workers across the country.

A week from today on Thursday, April 4, M.E.B.A. Union halls will be closed for Jesse Calhoon Day. Jesse was the Union's longest serving President (1963-1985). Throughout his presidency, he used his political savvy coupled with shrewd negotiating to win unprecedented gains for members and safeguard American maritime jobs at large. He vigorously fought for legislation to protect thousands of U.S. mariner jobs and helped ensure the continued viability of the U.S. maritime industry. Among many other achievements under Calhoon's administration, the Union established the training school which bears his name, merged the deep-sea districts, Pacific Coast District and District 1 into a single all coast unit, and transformed M.E.B.A.'s pension plan into the best in the maritime industry. Born on April 4, 1923, Jesse made his final voyage on October 22, 2013 at the age of 90.

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

Monday, April 8 – **Boston@1200; Seattle (Fife)@1300.**

Tuesday, April 9 – **CMES@1430; Charleston@1400; Houston@1315; Oakland@1230.**

Wednesday, April 10 – **Jacksonville@1300; New Orleans@1315; Online HQ "Town Hall" Meeting@1300 (No Voting) – Register by emailing mebahq@mebaunion.org**

Thursday, April 11 – **L.A. (San Pedro)@1230; NY/NJ@1300; Norfolk@1300; Tampa@1300.**

Friday, April 12 – **Honolulu@1100**

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