

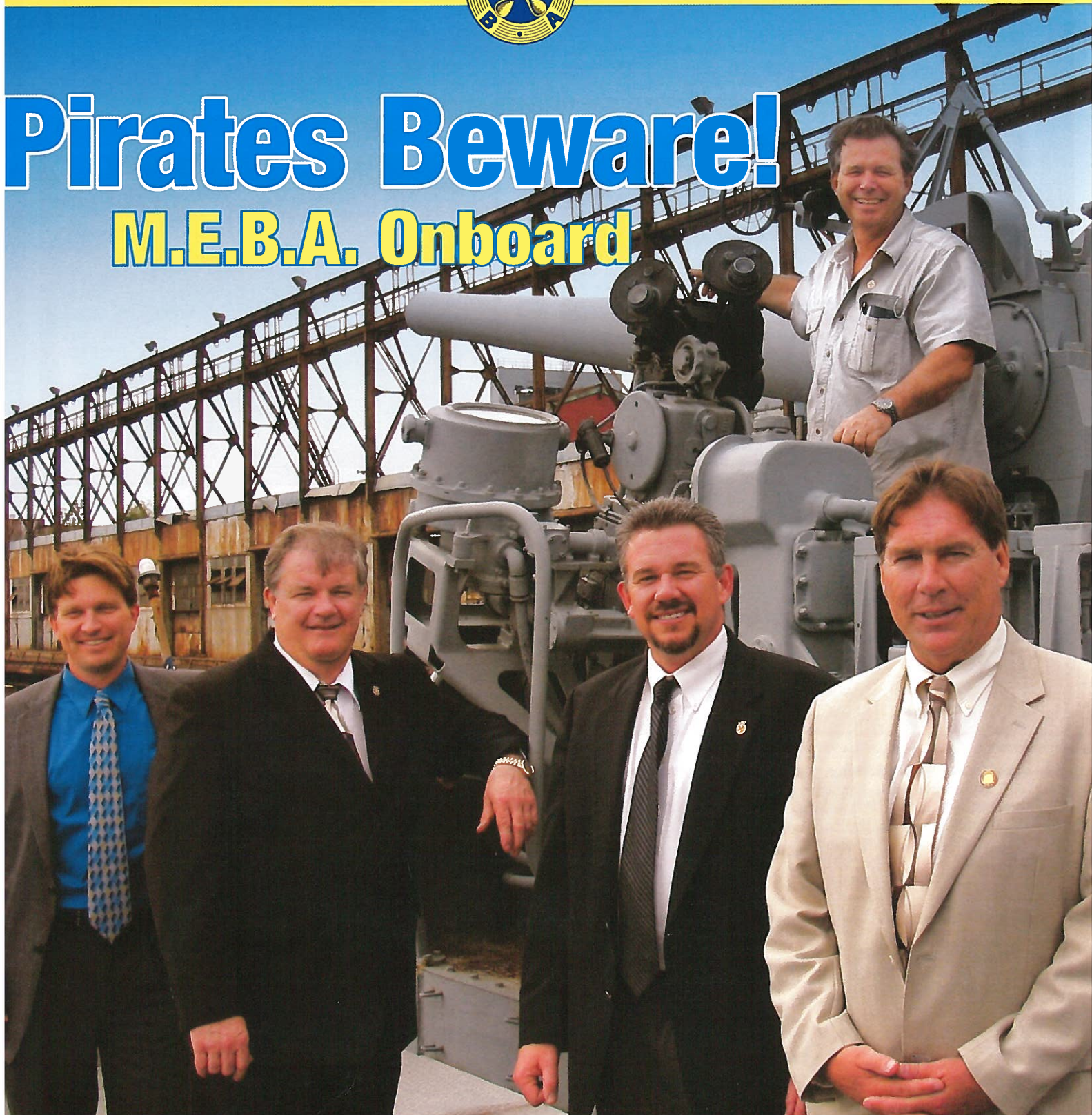
MARINE OFFICER

Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (AFL-CIO)



Summer 2009

Pirates Beware! M.E.B.A. Onboard





A Message From President Don Keefe

The past two months have been an unsettling time for merchant mariners in the US Flag Fleet. At the outset, I must express my relief that the most immediate threat to our members and their families has passed. Although there are many demands inherent in a mariner's life and many sacrifices made by their families, the crime of piracy must not remain one of them. The piracy problem needs to be solved. It is the most serious and imminent threat facing our membership, our union, and our profession. I remain committed to keeping this a core interest in working with other maritime unions, companies, and the federal government to protect our members against piracy.

During the past few weeks, I have met with senior maritime industry officials and admirals in the Coast Guard, Navy, and Department of Defense to discuss the most effective protection the US government can provide to our globally situated membership. Military and regulatory agencies must implement a satisfactory plan with sufficient haste or seek a legislative solution requiring the Department of Defense to protect American citizens abroad. The M.E.B.A. has already testified at Congressional and Executive hearings and will continue to position piracy as the focus of maritime issues in D.C. However, the vast geographic area prowled by pirates cannot be effectively policed by our government alone. The eradication of the pirate threat requires our government to work closely and effectively with America's trusted and reliable allies. I will continue to pressure decision makers in the armed forces to put the safety of our nation's merchant mariners, the fourth arm of defense, before petty disputes about territory and jurisdiction.

By protecting M.E.B.A. members, companies will be safeguarding their most valuable asset – highly skilled US merchant mariners – the most important factor in their long term strategy to maintain a productive and competitive US Flag Fleet. The skill of the M.E.B.A. engineer and deck officer is at the center of every contracted company's competitive advantage; protecting the health and welfare of every M.E.B.A. member will remain the center of all of my efforts. This will require the Union, our companies, and our membership to maintain an open mind. Policies that made sense in another era will need to be revisited and only through creative implementation

of all available tools can we find optimal solutions to all challenges our Union and our members face.

Although the prevalence of piracy threats and anti-piracy efforts has demanded a large portion of my time, rest assured that the steady process of strengthening the M.E.B.A. continues. Recently, the FRC concluded its review of the Union's finances. Their report highlights the progress we continue to make towards fiscal responsibility. In a recent letter to the membership, I noted that, if necessary, I would support a dues increase. Thankfully, because of cost cutting measures, a dues increase will not be required for the foreseeable future. However, the M.E.B.A. is not yet totally out of the financial woods; I pledge to continue with my financial reforms and look forward to an FRC in the near future which proclaims a growing surplus in the M.E.B.A. treasury.

Finally, I am pleased to announce that the M.E.B.A. has contracted two new ships—the APL JAPAN and the APL AGATE. Obtaining this new tonnage was a significant victory for the M.E.B.A. and the US Fleet because these two ships do not participate in the Maritime Security Program. The vessels will operate solely on their ability to generate revenues; I am confident the M.E.B.A. will operate the JAPAN and AGATE efficiently and effectively ensuring their profitable future.

Today, M.E.B.A. members sail in a new era. Yet danger on the job is nothing new for the US Merchant Marine. The M.E.B.A. faced German U-Boats in two world wars. More recently, the M.E.B.A. transported supplies for US soldiers fighting in the war zones of the Persian Gulf and Central Asia. Someday soon, the ocean will once again be the exclusive domain of the hardworking mariner. Just as we overcame past dangers, so too will we continue to meet challenges presented during our time with unity, pride and professionalism.

In Unity and Friendship,

Don Keefe

Political Action Fund Honor Roll

2009 is already off to a good start legislatively for the maritime industry. Our relationships with Senators and Members of Congress have helped us forward a number of important maritime initiatives that will serve our members well including a bill restoring sanity to the Merchant Mariner Document medical review process. M.E.B.A.'s Political Action Fund has helped give us a voice on Capitol Hill as a joint industry effort continues to work with Congress to help usher in full funding for the Maritime Security Program, protection of the Jones Act and cabotage laws, and a Harbor Maintenance Tax exemption bill that would help expedite a short sea shipping system. The P.A.F. also allows us to be a prominent participant in ongoing high-level talks to protect our mariners from piracy.

This access to the corridors of power is not simply given to us. It takes years to foster relationships with lawmakers in Washington D.C. and around the country on the state level who can assist our industry. It takes a well-built M.E.B.A. legislative and political team assisted by our members and retirees to seize opportunities to ensure the future of U.S.-flag mariners.

Maritime is a bipartisan industry that gains support from both sides of the aisle. We are on the right side of the issues as we keep our country's economy moving and we remain a key cog in our national defense. It takes a strong P.A.F. to help our Congress understand the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine. It takes a membership committed to guarantee future generations of M.E.B.A. officers to ensure a strong P.A.F. Please give generously to the Political Action Fund!

Following is a list of active and retired members who contributed to the Political Action Fund in Calendar Year 2008. A commemorative challenge coin has been issued to each of them in gratitude for their commitment to keep the M.E.B.A. strong. If you didn't receive yours then clarify your mailing address with Headquarters. Those who contribute over \$1,000 during a Calendar Year may select from additional rewards such as his or hers M.E.B.A. watches, an M.E.B.A. multi-tool or an M.E.B.A. Steak Knife set. A different challenge coin and additional rewards will be offered to those who contribute over a certain dollar amount during Calendar Year 2009. Please contribute for the good of your Union!



Left: The Propeller Club's Salute to Congress event honors politicians who have made contributions to the maritime industry. The P.A.F. helps us identify then foster relationships with lawmakers who will go to bat for our industry. Left to right are M.E.B.A. President Don Keefe, Armed Service Committee Chairman Rep. Ike Skelton (D-MO) who has been a strong voice for inland waterways and fighting global piracy, the MAERSK ALABAMA's Chief Engineer (Mike Perry) and Chief Mate (MM&P's Shane Murphy), and Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo.



Right: Member Brian McArdle chatting with Maryland Governor Martin O'Malley who was in Easton, MD for a town meeting recently. M.E.B.A. continues a dialogue with the Governor about LNG and other issues of interest.



Above: Secretary-Treasurer (and P.A.F. Chairman) Bill Van Loo at left with Rep. Gene Taylor (D-Miss.) who is a maritime industry champion.

Thomas Brown	Mark Schultz	Harold Schreier	Alan J. Lavertu	Joseph T. Smith	Billy Langfitt
Stephen E. Smith	Michael Snow	Brendon Maloney	Brian Good	Joshua Blanchard	Mike Martineau
George Rydberg	Peter Jendrasko	Brian D. Koehchley	Clarence Rater	Ken Farley	Andrew Drotning
Kesse N. Kesse	Rolando R Gumanas	Brian Gerrish	David Krym	Leonard Collevcechio	Andrew MacDougal
George Torrey	Wallace Barton	Carter Seabro	David Rivera	Maciej Szmytkowski	Gregory Jackson
Rafa Slubarski	Frederick Gleason	Charles Gregory	Francisco Soares	Marc Supersano	Sterling Jackson
Bruce Bolduc	Edward Figelski	Charles Reed	Frank Coratti	Mark Gilmour	Douglas McPhee
Bruce J. Huntington	Leo Muldowney	David Perry	Frederick Price	Mathew Papson	Albert Morgan
Chun-Yi Liu	Peter Steverman	Edward Church III	George Dubuc	Michael Fisher	Clarence Langford
David Goddard	Alan Borgen	Francis Armitage	Glenn P. Forgues	Michael Patrick	Darrell Salsgiver
David McMillan	Edward Spaulding	Gary Tucker	Harold Chandler	Nathan J. Edwards	Dave Cash
Davis Hencye	Jeffrey Burford	Howard F. Foreman	Jeff Pillard	Paul Koester	Dean Bender
Erik Cote	Peter Tormala	James Tapley	John Hutcherson	Richard Collins	Duncan Ballenger
Frank James	Robert Cole	Jason Buchinger	Lee Vogel	Richard Hagerman	Erik Nowak
James Palmer	James Frazier	Jason Callahan	Leo Williams	Scott Manchester	Felix Tapales
Jason Law	Charles Hughes	John Coulter	Michael Purcell	Sean Wall	Frank Anglacci
Kenneth Bunn	John Fischer	John O'Donnell	Michael Tucey	Shane D Mahaffey	George Perkins
Kenneth W. Ewell	Edwin McIntosh	John Rodgers	Michael Wasson	Shaun Burke	Isidro J. Fernandez
Kevin Cross	Ernest O. Leep	John Sheridan Jr.	Oren O. Bentley	Stanley Hjort	James Anderson
Lars Enqvist	Eugene M. Ennesser	Matthew Lang	Owen Philbin	Stanley Jones	James Gilroy
Lorne Warczinsky	James Moore	Matthieu Deboer	Richard Butzen	Stephen Franks	James Staats
Luke Damon	Kenneth A. Marcinak	Michael Burns	Stephen Meyer	Terence Chan	Jan Diehn
Matthew Galle	Mark Chartier	Michael R. Willard	Steven Osmus	Thomas Fraczak	Jeffrey Pihl
Michael H.	Matthew Wheble	Michael Ryan	Sylvan Haas	Thomas Poulin	Jerzy Ziolek
O'Sullivan	Michael Olson	Patrick Funk	Vladimir Gostevskiyh	Vincent Atwood	Joe Schmitt
Mitchell Cihomsky	Peters Myers	Patrick Preston	Zbyslaw Ziolek	William Peddie	John Callahan
Patrick Wright	Robert Ring	Robert Nims	Delbert Wilson	John Rogers	John Caranzaro
Paul R. Wilson	Sonny Acosta	Roger Swanson	Eric Bingener	Juri Novozilov	Joshua Lemmon
Pierre Blume	Timothy Morton	Steven Olson	Greg Blasquez	Allen Pryor	Kenneth Ritzinger
Ramon J. Schwartz	Todd Sparling	Steven Pike	Harry A. Kirmon	William Stemwell	Kevin P. Kelly
Bernard Shults	William B. Bateman	William C.	Jack Menedez	Manuel Carrancho	Kevin Wright
John Burress	Russell Rippetoe	Winchenbach	Lawrence Young	Melchor Llanos	Laurence White III
Craig Newton	Jack Swaeringin	Garrett Kearbey	Marc Hoffman	Andrew Dunlop	Lorne Closson
Enrico Butcher	Clifton Johnson	Wayne Webb	Marlin Carpenter	Antonio Macatiag	Mark Tracy
Thomas Benz	William Pearce	Greg Kuijper	William Campbell	Bradley Ducharme	Matthew Kehoe
Leonard Hanson	David Backstedt	Michael Martykan	Edward Henning	Chance Parent	Maurice Welsh
Brian Fritschi	Christopher Myers	Gaylon Hurlston	John Green	Charles Jerrier	Michael Carr
Michael Kennedy	Clyde E. Dodson	Darin Huggins	Aaron Faulhaber	David Anderson	Michael Coggio
Patrick W. Duffy	Frederick Fynan	Gary L. Smith	Andrew Wormwood	David Davis	Michael Mallini
Ralph Dasha	Richard Adams	Gene Tarzetti	Benjamin Larrabee	Douglas McCall	Michael Morris
Charles Williams	Todd Bilodeau	Geoffrey Benn	Brian Conroy	George Tonash	Mike Murphy
Michael Christensen	Lucas Drake	James Adams	Christian Konopaski	Henry Cole	Mike Sharkey
Lloyd Roberts	Patrick Fales	John Rice	Daniel Gifford	James Barr	Neil Quinn
Michael Bocchini	Anthony Aiell	Kevin Corwin	David Bick	James Feyler	Nicholas Neill
Glenn T. Mitchell	Brian Orme	Kevin J. Fuller	Dennis Cline	John Engelbretch	Paul G. Smith
Joseph Padula	Charles Zenter	Louis Lincoln III	Donald Jeske	Johnathan Hines	Paul Venuti
Joshua Karalitzky	Christopher Mcintyre	Luis Quinones	Edward Quinn	Joseph Lacey	Phyllis Prokopich
Julie Penny	Christopher Parent	Michael Jablonski	Eric Connor	Joseph Robson	Ralph J. Sims
Mieczyslaw Pekalski	Eric Gould	Robert Jordan	Eric Downer	Kelly Cameron	Robert Flanagan
Curtis Bremer	Glenn C. Yarborough	Robert Kenny	Frank A. Wyrick	Kevin Lee	Robert Noack
Rudolph Breton	Jack Williams	Seth Harris	Frank Czuba	Larry Rood	Robert Rooks
Harold McAllister	Jan Waalewyn	Thomas Ochs	Gerard Dundan	Mario Benedetti	Sean Raferty
Larry W. Pitts	Jennifer Flounders	Thomas Prior	Glen Scott	Mary Halloran	Stephen Elson
Robert Griffiths	John L. Fountas	Tracy Burke	Harold Watts	Michael McFeeley	Stephen Wessling
Alfredo Sanchez	Joseph Mastromarine	Waldemar Jazefowicz	Harold Watts	Michael	Steven Day
John Johnson	Kenneth Adair Jr.	William Burns	James M. Langmeyer	Wojciechowski	Steven Minott
Robert Winton	Michael Thomsen	Percy Knudsen	James S. Burnside	Patrick Ashley	Tom McKenzie
Danielle Centeno	Nathan Barnard	Megan Jenkins	Jeffrey Behnke	Peter Nee	Tracy Redding
Eric Johnson	Robert Trifonoff	Ralph Groot	Jeffrey Donohue	Robert Mitchell	Warren McLain
Gary Dustin	Samuel Shrake	Franks Volonnino	Jerry L. Johnson	Ryan Quinlan	
James Byrne	Joseph Blair	Louis Kingma	John Larson	Thomas Knowlton	
Jeffrey Sousa	David Fiala	John Ebanks	John O'Brien	Thomas Treen	
John Haarmann	Keith Grandy	Aaron Simard	Jose R. Velez	Timothy Jany	

lines began sailing their vessels further away from the coast, pirates amended their plans of attack to keep the ransom money coming. Motherships, often vessels previously hijacked by pirates, are being used to bring pirate skiffs hundreds of miles off the coast to target commercial vessels and fishing boats – anything that will allow them an ill-gotten payday. ALABAMA Chief Engineer Mike Perry knew the risks, and through reports and pirate chatter realized that the level of pirate activity was even more palpable than it was at this time last year. Fortunately, he had a great relationship with the permanent officers onboard and they had worked seamlessly in the past on preparing the crew for emergency situations. Capt. Phillips and First Mate Shane Murphy, both MM&P members, had just gotten back to the ship in the last ten days joining Chief Perry and his 1st Assistant Engineer Matt Fisher, both proud M.E.B.A. members.

“Capt. Phillips is a stickler for drills and safety,” M.E.B.A.’s Dick Mathews, the 2nd A/E aboard the ship noted. “He is the epitome of a safety minded captain.”

The Captain sets the tone aboard the ship and he emphasized the dangers the crew could face on this voyage. “You absorb the culture instilled on the ship,” Mathews pointed out. “I already knew the stuff that he was saying, but it reinforces what you already know to make you act quicker – and quicker is better.”

Indeed M.E.B.A. officers, along with MM&P and SIU crewmembers aboard who upgrade their skills at their unions’ Maryland-based training facilities, are well-prepared for hazards at sea. The Calhoon M.E.B.A. Engineering School in Easton, MD offers a range of courses designed to prepare our members to deal with a number of emergency situations that could take place aboard ship. Among many other offerings, our School hosts valuable training courses on Vessel Security Officer, Small Arms, Government Vessel Operations (Damage Control & CBRD), HAZMAT and Fast Rescue Boat.

“We knew we were in Indian country,” said John Cronan, an M.E.B.A. member serving as 3rd A/E. “Everyone knew that piracy was for real – we train for this.”

A Close Encounter

Though later many in the American media portrayed the incident as the very first attack by pirates against a U.S.-flag ship, many an M.E.B.A. member can describe his or her own close encounter with sea bandits. In fact the MAERSK ALABAMA had been approached by pirates a day before the boarding. The crew had been doing drills which at times could get pretty elaborate under the Captain’s leadership. They had



The MAERSK ALABAMA was on a run from Salalah to Djibouti to Mombasa with a load of food aid cargo when four heavily armed pirates attempted to take over the ship.

done a container fire simulation and a detailed security drill including a piracy scenario. Right in conjunction with the drill, the bridge watch reported a suspicious small craft less than two miles away that was continuing to advance. The Captain sounded the alarm and the ship’s crew began executing the vessel security plan. Mike Perry and the engineers returned to their stations and made sure the ship achieved full power as the ALABAMA sped up and began evasive maneuvers.

However, the sea state wasn’t ideal for the small craft as it struggled to successfully increase its speed through choppy waters. It closed within a mile before finally giving up and turning around. 2nd A/E Dick Mathews later wondered if it was a reconnaissance boat. “Were they looking to see what kind of ship it was? Is it low and slow? What size is the free board? [distance between water and main deck where you could climb up]. Is it easy to attack? Is it a high speed vessel? Is it one we can hit?”



On April 14, the LIBERTY SUN took small arms fire and absorbed several RPG volleys (including this one) in a pirate attack near Somalia. In early May, the M.E.B.A.-crewed MSC ship USNS LEWIS & CLARK was also fired upon by Somali pirates but managed to evade them without taking damage.



The four pirates speeding along the ship's port quarter shortly before the boarding on April 8. (Photo courtesy of Ken Quinn)

Here There Be Pirates

The crew grabbed their equipment, most got their radios and then mustered at their stations. Things were moving quickly. First Mate Murphy was on deck monitoring pirate movements and reporting to the Captain as the crew listened in on their own radios to the developing situation. With the muster and lockdown accomplished and knowing that the crew had completed all phases of the piracy plan, C/E Perry called out to the First Mate on the radio recommending that the rest of the crew report to the Engine Control Room (ECR) where it was safer. The First Mate agreed and the order was passed.

The pirate boat came up on the port side of the ALABAMA amidships, forward of the gangway. A hook was chucked up on deck and a barefoot, AK-47 wielding pirate scampered up the attached rope. Seconds later the pirate was at the foot of the stairs leading up the side of the house towards the bridge where he shot the lock off the security gate. A moment after that, the crew heard the Captain make a chilling announcement as the gun-toting pirate walked into the wheelhouse: "The bridge has been compromised."

By then, fifteen of the twenty ALABAMA crewmembers were accounted for in the Engine Control Room. C/E Perry stayed in the ECR but sent everyone else to the secure area he had designated where the crew could barricade themselves inside.

Chief Perry then took main engine control away from the bridge and called 1st Engineer Matt Fisher to take control of the steering gear. "So he had steering, I had engine control," Perry recounted. "I kept the engine running at full and ordered the 1st Engineer to keep swinging the rudder port to starboard to make it harder for the other pirates to get up and to try to swamp their boat."

The gambit worked – but not before the pirates got onboard. However, their vessel was swamped – a fact that dramatically changed the dynamics of the siege on the ship.

M.E.B.A. Second Mate Ken Quinn, who was sailing on the vessel courtesy of the Pass-Through program with MM&P, said that the pirate "who had climbed up the line then made the crew on the bridge go down and pay out the pilot ladder at gunpoint so the other three could climb aboard."

The First Mate was still on deck tracking the pirates' movements and passing on information. He was observing and calling out over the radio about what weapons they had (AK-47s & pistols) along with other details.

First Mate Murphy was keeping up the radio talk trying to gather data on the intruders. The Captain would answer questions while seemingly talking about something more innocuous and unrelated. He was able to take advantage of the pirates' limited command of the English language to relay what was really

“There’s nothing running on the ship so sound travels,” he said. “I’m moving slowly - and I’m ready to run back the other way if I’m discovered. It was imperative that in order to protect the crew the ship had to be black or the pirates would feel comfortable in coming down and finding them.”

“That was the start of their rude awakening,” 3rd A/E Cronan pointed out.

After disabling everything, C/E Perry met up with the First Mate topside and the two of them discussed the situation. Sometime later, in the distance they spied a pirate walking up the starboard side of the ship, then back around down the port side to the house with the Captain at gunpoint – searching for the crew. Phillips was talking loudly so as to warn the crew away. Perry realized that if he had been a little closer it would have been possible for him to tackle the pirate. But as it was, he had to let him go. C/E Perry and 1/M Murphy then worked out a rudimentary communication method using radio clicks or utilizing different channels – in order to pass along coded information.

Soon after, they split up and continued freelancing around the vessel. The sighting of the lone pirate walking around with the Captain inspired Perry to take precautions in case a better opportunity arose.

Sweatbox

Down below it was heating up. The sea temperature was close to 90 degrees as the ship lay dead in the water miles from the equator baking in the hot sun. The pirates had boarded the ship 15 minutes before breakfast opened up and the 14 crewmembers barricaded in “the Hide” were burning with thirst as the temperature soared to 125 degrees. It was a sweatbox, with no ventilation, no water and no light. “We were in a little bit of a pickle,” 2nd A/E Mathews recalled. “We were hunkering down for what was turning out to be a long day.”

The engineers later opened up a “manhole” to go to the bathroom. It was very sanitary and nobody “missed.” They listened to the walkie-talkies to try to figure out what was going on – but mostly they stayed quiet trying to conserve energy.

Cat and Mouse

Chief Perry made his way to the pitch black Engine Room and slowly groped through the dark to the Machine Shop where he collected some nylon zip ties – in case he was able to subdue one of the pirates. Not wanting to tip off the intruders he kept his flashlight off. “I had to think like a blind person,” Perry



A Discovery Channel reenactment of a pirate with a gun to the back of an actor portraying Third Mate Colin Wright. They filmed on the M.E.B.A.-crewed Keystone RRF vessel CAPE RISE in Norfolk, VA. Two different specials on the incident premiere in the month of June – one on Discovery Channel and the other on The Learning Channel (TLC), which is part of the Discovery network.

remembered. “I was counting steps, feeling for familiar points and navigating the obstacles. There was slight illumination from the indicator LEDs on the few control panels around the Engine Room that gave me reference points as I moved about.” He gathered his equipment and took note of vantage points in the engine area where he could hide and possibly launch an attack.

It was like a haunted house, pitch black with creaking noises from the thermal expansion. “It was very creepy,” said Perry. Around 10 a.m., Chief Perry suddenly heard voices and Capt. Phillips, accompanied by a gun toting pirate, entered the space. The pirate walked in a mere ten feet away from where Perry was hidden but enough piping and equipment prevented the Chief’s discovery. Perry noted, “They made it halfway around the Engine Room. I heard the Captain say, ‘see this is the Engine Room – there’s nobody here’ – and they turned and left.”

On the radio the Captain, like a carnival barker, continued to keep the crew informed of their movements as the pirates went through the state rooms in search of the 16 hidden crewmembers.

Around 11 a.m., Perry called 1st A/E Matt Fisher via the hand-cranked sound powered phone system. He needed clarification on whether the crew wanted to relocate to another part of the ship. A quick poll revealed that the crew felt safer together in the secure location. Fisher then went with Chief Perry to collect water. They were just filling up some jugs when the same Engine Room door opened again. Fisher and Perry grabbed the water



The crew relaxes after pulling into Mombasa. Second Mate Ken Quinn is at right. Behind him are 1st A/E Matt Fisher looking at the camera and 2nd A/E Dick Mathews. In the background are GUDE Miguel Ruiz and Steward Assistant Mario Clotter. (Photo courtesy of Ken Quinn)



A photo of the captured pirate Abduwali Muse aboard the MAERSK ALABAMA shortly after the takedown. (Photo courtesy of Ken Quinn)

could lift with one arm. The pirate was bleeding profusely and the Chief asked the Second Mate to attend to the wounds with some clean rags that were in “the Hide.” No longer a hostage, ATM now joined the crew and their new prisoner in the secure room. Mike Perry pulled out his radio and announced, “One down!” He remained outside the secure room peering around in the darkness.

The crew couldn't know at the time, but the pirates' hostage count on the bridge had been cut in half. Minutes before the leader was captured, the four Somalis were becoming increasingly aggravated by their lack of ship control and inability to locate the crew. Weapons were trained on Third Mate Colin Wright and the pirates threatened to shoot him if the crew didn't reveal themselves. A break in this intolerable situation came when Abduwali apparently sent Wright off with orders to locate the crew and get them to give themselves up. The Third Mate then quite logically scampered off the bridge and found a safe haven to stash himself.

At that point, Abduwali announced that he would find the crew himself and rounded up ATM to shuttle him around the ship. In what must have been one of the more convincing speeches of our times, ATM apparently persuaded Abduwali to leave his pistol behind. “I'm a Muslim – you're a Muslim,” ATM allegedly told the pirate. “I know where they're at but they won't come out if you have a gun.” That's when the two of them came down through the house where Chief Engineer Mike Perry was lurking in the dark.

Back in the Hole

Cronan and the ABs had been guarding the door to the secure room, each with a piece of equipment they could use as a weapon. When they opened up for ATM, they brought the prisoner into the hole with them and got him situated. “He was babbling – preparing to meet Allah,” said Mathews.

The Chief Engineer was communicating by radio with Capt. Phillips and learned that the three remaining pirates needed to know if Abduwali was alive. The crew held up the walkie talkie to Abduwali's face and let him spit out a few syllables.

When the pirate was pulled into the room, Second Mate Ken Quinn lowered his gaze and made a startling revelation. “I looked down at his feet and he was wearing my shoes.” This was a result of the pirates' search of the state rooms that proved otherwise fruitless.

Harkening back to his training in the Calhoun School's Vessel Security Officer course, 2nd A/E Dick Mathews made sure that the prisoner was searched adequately. “There's a couple things I trained for in [Vessel Security Officer Instructor Jack Menendez's] class that I employed that day on the ship,” Mathews noted. “I didn't even have to think about it.

3rd A/E Cronan said, “We absolutely treated him humanely. There were two sides to our treatment. First, sympathy – ‘Oh, poor little pirate’ but then we were firm with him. We let him know that we weren't playing. We were excited. The adrenaline was up. But we treated him a lot better than he would have treated us.”

But the crew was due for another terrifying moment. Around 3:00 p.m. they heard footsteps overhead and the fifteen shipmates in the hole went deathly silent. The pirates were walking overhead with Capt. Phillips still chattering away. The Somalis tried to open the hatch but the padeye and the securing line held fast and thwarted their attempt. One pirate then took a flashlight and peered down the small rope scuttle used to handle mooring lines. The crewmembers could hear the distinctive sound of a pirate sliding back the action on his AK-47. But nothing caught the pirate's eye during his quick search and the Captain kept things moving, continuing his banter, "Oh no, no, no – that's just the rope scuttle – let's go get that fuel."

Waving the White Flag

"As the day went on the pirates became desperate to get out of there," 1st A/E Matt Fisher noted. They were completely flustered. The three remaining pirates had lost their leader and they were being hunted. "We were a harder target than they ever experienced," Cronan confirmed.

Around this time, Chief Perry assisted by 1st A/E Fisher in communication with the First Mate stole up to the bridge seeking to free another crewmember. Their search was initially unrewarding. But later on the bridge wing, after the 1st A/E returned to the secure room, Chief Perry discovered the unguarded AB Clifford Lacon, who had spent his day being threatened with a gun in his face. He sent Clifford down below to join the rest of the crew.

The pirates had decided to cut their losses and vacate the premises. The three pirates had gone to the emergency generator compartment to get fuel – to use in the Man Overboard (MOB) rescue boat, an idea suggested several times over the day by First Mate Shane Murphy. "We had discussed a strategy of giving the pirates a way out of their situation," Chief Perry noted. It took about an hour to get the boat ready to launch and Capt. Phillips was recruited to make it happen. The Captain then called from the B deck MOB boat station that he was going to launch the boat with the three pirates and that the crew should have the Somali prisoner ready for an exchange.

From Out of the Grave

All but three of the 17 shipmates in the overheated secure room had been suffering there since around 8 in the morning. As the afternoon rounded out and the evening hours approached, the suffocating heat had begun to take its toll. "These people were in severe heat stress," said Chief Perry. "In heat stress mode it's hard to move and think logically. They were pretty whooped."



At the Salute to Congress Award ceremony are (l-r) Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo, President Don Keefe, ALABAMA C/E Mike Perry, First Mate Shane Murphy, Second Mate Ken Quinn and MM&P President Tim Brown.

"We were scary close to passing out," said 2nd A/E Dick Mathews.

Chief Perry called his M.E.B.A. engineers out of the room and the four of them began the process of bringing the ship back to life. They got the emergency generator and emergency air compressor going. They restored the lighting and recovered the Engine Room from a dead plant. The plan was to have all electrical power back online and the Main Engine at the ready so that the ship could be fired up right after the exchange. They could then pull away and prevent another attempt on the ship.

The Captain and First Mate were working out the details of the exchange. "It all sounded good and we had hope," Chief Perry recalled. "There were constant reassurances back and forth with the pirates on what was about to take place."

The engineers soon established electrical power at the boat launching winch which needs the juice to lift the crane arm down and launch the boat.

Once the pirates were off the ship in the MOB boat along with the Captain around 5 p.m. – the Chief gave the signal for the rest of the crew to come out of the secure room. It was a jolt to the senses when the Chief fully understood the hell that these crewmembers had been through for over eight hours. With muscle tone degrading, they were all suffering intense muscle cramps and had begun breaking down.

They emerged one by one, some could barely walk and many collapsed in a heap. "They were like the walking dead coming out of their graves," Chief Perry recalled. "This was a very dangerous situation. Every one of them should have been in the hospital hooked up to I.V.'s. I was looking at dead people."

The Twenty-Strong Crew of the MAERSK ALABAMA

Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (M.E.B.A.) Officers

Chief Engineer – Mike Perry
1st A/E – Matt Fisher
2nd A/E – Dick Mathews
3rd A/E – John Cronan
Second Mate - Ken Quinn

Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P) Officers

Captain – Richard Phillips
First Mate - Shane Murphy
Third Mate - Colin Wright

Seafarers International Union (SIU) Unlicensed Crew

AB – ATM Zahid Reza
AB - Clifford Lacon
AB - Hector Sanchez
AB - Andrew Brzezinski
AB - Mohamed Abdelwahab
Bosun – William Rios
Electrician – John White
Qualified Man Engine Dept. (QMED) – Jimmy Sabga
General Utility, Deck and Engine (GUDE) – Miguel Ruiz
Steward – Richard Hicks
Cook – Husain Salah
Steward Assistant (S.A.) – Mario Clotter



Capt. Phillips, testifying before a Senate Subcommittee, called for force protection aboard ships transiting through piracy hotspots. He is seen here with Liberty Maritime Corp. President and CEO Phil Shapiro who praised his crew aboard the LIBERTY SUN who were fired upon by pirates. "These men and women are all trained to the highest levels of seamanship and technical skill by our country's service and maritime academies and by the continuing education systems of their unions."

Escape to Nowhere

The crew spent the rest of the night shadowing the lifeboat holding out hope they could find a way to bring the Captain back to the fold.

They wondered if out in the dark, fifty more of the pirates' friends could be assembling for a second assault on the ship. Every precaution had to be taken to prevent a reboarding. The crew doubled the lookouts and engineers began working topside to assist in the effort. Chief Perry worked out of the wheelhouse as assistant deck officer and ordered the 3rd A/E to get lashing gear. "I want a big pile of heavy metal. In case they try to storm back up we can bombard them." There was a lot of hollering through the night from the crew in the direction of the lifeboat — mostly: "Let the Captain go!" or "Just let him jump in the water and you can go!" Cooks became lookouts, engineers became food runners. They never abandoned Captain Phillips and not a man ever whimpered about it.

That evening, the First Mate was in communication with the Navy and a search plane spotted them. When the USS BAINBRIDGE showed up on the scene around midnight they took over the situation and ordered the ALABAMA

to stand down. But it wasn't until the next morning that an 18-person armed team was put on the ALABAMA and the crew could finally get the sense that they were safe.

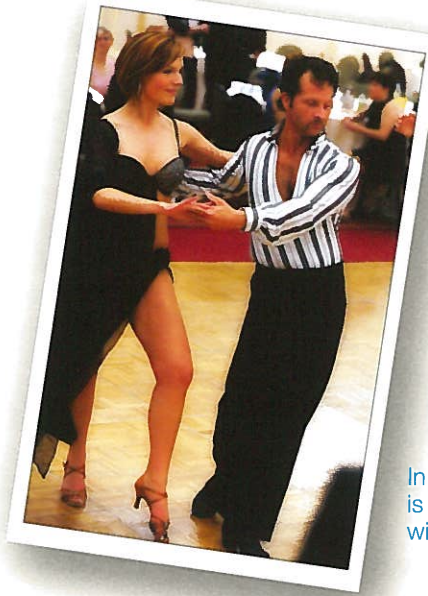
Back Up to Speed

The rest of the story has been well reported by the world media. Capt. Phillips remained a prisoner aboard the lifeboat from Wednesday evening until Sunday afternoon when sharpshooting Navy SEALs liberated him from his would-be coffin.

It was painful for the entire crew when they were ordered onto Kenya the next afternoon leaving the Captain behind. Days later they could celebrate in the Port of Mombasa when they got the news that Captain Phillips had been rescued. The entire crew had endured the ordeal intact.

Brotherhood of the Sea

"We maintained our discipline and we stuck together," said Cronan. "We didn't have to retake the ship because we never surrendered it...We're American seamen, we're union members. We stuck together and we did our jobs...I saw acts of courage and bravery from my shipmates that truly made me proud to be an American merchant seaman." 1st A/E Fisher noted, "It's close quarters on a ship – kind of like



Mike Tinkel is a 19-year member who plans on being a fulltime Ballroom teacher by the end of next year. Currently he sails on MTL's CHARLESTON EXPRESS as the 1st A/E but he put in years shipping out aboard the ETC LNG ships. He's only danced for four years now but he has racked up a series of awards and even lives at the Arthur Murray Studio in Niantic, CT. In Photo above he is listening to the rhythm of the engines aboard the CHARLESTON EXPRESS.

In the photo to the left Mike Tinkel is doing the Open Rhythm Cha Cha with teacher Jessica Freitas.



M.E.B.A. retiree Charles "Blackie" Blockston was aboard the Lykes ship SS CARLTON on the dangerous Murmansk Run during WWII. Following repairs after a German air attack in July 1942, the ship's convoy (PQ-17) was scattered by order of the British Admiralty after a supposed sighting of German warships. Left without Naval escort, the convoy dispersal resulted in 24 out of 33 ships being sunk including the CARLTON. Blackie spent 19 days in a lifeboat in the Barents Sea drifting about 600 miles. The boat was spotted by two Norwegian fishermen – a father and son – who towed them to the small fishing village of Tufjord. The German Army soon arrived and captured them and had them shipped off to a POW camp in Norway. However, that vessel hit a British mine and sunk to the bottom. A Danish fishing trawler taken over by the Germans picked them up and Blackie and his fellow survivors were brought to a POW camp near Hamburg where they spent the rest of the war. In 1987, he went back to Tufjord and located the Norwegian fisherman who, along with his father, had rescued the lifeboat survivors. Blackie shipped out with the M.E.B.A. until 1982 sailing the Korean and Vietnam wars. He still puts in time aboard ship on the SS JOHN BROWN, a Liberty Ship berthed in Baltimore, MD.



M.E.B.A. retiree Lou Martone was saved by a cup of coffee. In World War II aboard the United Fruit Company banana boat SS ESPARTA in April 1942, Lou was working in the ship's fire room after midnight when he decided to get some coffee. As soon as he shuffled into the engine room vestibule where the java was being brewed by a crewmember, a torpedo from a German U-boat blasted the ship on the starboard side blowing the hatch covers off the #3 and #4 holds. The scalding coffee spilled all over the shirtless shipmate who began screaming. Lou ran back towards his station and soon discovered that the fire room was completely demolished full of twisted metal and debris. "If I had been in the fire room at that time," he said, "there's no way in the world I would have ever gotten out of there." Lou joked that he has drunk a pot of coffee every morning since.



A recent photo of the MCFARLAND, one of four M.E.B.A.-crewed oceangoing hopper dredges owned and operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. It is the only dredge in the world with triple capability for direct pumpout, bottom discharge and sidelaying or boom discharge.

Shipping Shorts

Horizon, Matson Win Bids to Relocate Marines

M.E.B.A. contracted companies Matson Navigation and Horizon Lines have won bids to help relocate 8,000 marines from Okinawa to the U.S. territory of Guam. The U.S. and Japan recently shored up an agreement for the move in which Japan will help foot the bill for relocation costs.

The U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) will spend up to \$100,000,000 on its contract with Matson involving shipments between U.S. West Coast ports to and from Hawaii and U.S. West Coast ports to and from Guam. The contract with Horizon Lines (also worth up to \$100,000,000) covers similar territory but also includes shipments between Alaska ports to and from Guam. For both contracts, work began in mid-March and is due to wrap up in November of this year.

Both companies, which already have shipping runs to Guam, are in better shape to carry out their new contracts after a cooperative move to upgrade the infrastructure in the Port of Guam. Months ago, Horizon and Matson jointly purchased three gantry cranes from the Port of Los Angeles. The cranes were retrofitted and modified and are enhancing the companies' productivity and handling capabilities in Guam.



Aboard the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry LeCONTE. Left to right are OS Rick Deising, Second Mate Nick Anderson, C/E Bob Seidman, C/M Gabreil Baylous, Alaska Governor Sarah Palin and Capt. Chris Biagi. M.E.B.A. officials along with a rank and file committee nailed down a new contract for the AMHS. Governor Palin recently signed a bill which funds the contract.



M.E.B.A. Honolulu continues its support for the ILWU by picketing at the Waikiki Pacific Beach Hotel. Hotel owner HTH Corporation has engaged in ugly union busting activities to defeat organizing efforts. Shown from left to right are Ray Silliman, Sterling Abel, Honolulu Rep. Adam Vokac, Pery Ahluwalia, Terence Chan and Scott Zinsius. Also picketing but not shown (he took the picture) was Ross Lee.

New Deal for AMHS Fleet

Following a series of arduous bargaining sessions spread out over a year and a half, an M.E.B.A. negotiating team succeeded in scoring a new deal for members sailing in the Alaska Marine Highway System. Among other things, the three-year accord won pay raises, medical contribution improvements and an increase in training contributions. The agreement was negotiated alongside the MM&P and IBU. M.E.B.A. members in the AMHS ratified the new language by a large margin and Alaska Governor Sarah Palin's signature on House Bill 81 provided the funding for the new deal.

Congratulations for Executive V.P. Mike Nizetich's negotiating team go to rank and file members Jeff Donohue, Gary Gilliland, Bob Seidman, Doug Wickre, Dave Barnes, Wayne Wilson, Tiny Olson, Eric Downer and M.E.B.A. Juneau Representative Ben Goldrich.

CMES to Host Maritime e-Learning Symposium

The Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School is hosting an International Maritime e-Learning Symposium that will take place from July 20-23 at the campus in Easton, Maryland. The symposium was set up to coordinate maritime e-Learning objectives for shipping companies, regulatory bodies, maritime academies, and training centers. The event will draw in shipping company



At the Marine Educational Forum at Massachusetts Maritime Academy are panelists who discussed the importance of training and regulations. Ed MacCormack, current Cadet Coordinator was also present and contributed with his unique insight. Left to right are MM&P Atlantic Coast V.P. Richard May, Kirby Inland V.P. Operations & Training Patrick Kelly, M.E.B.A. Boston Representative Bill Campbell, AMO's John Hafner and Thomas Laird, and MMA Dean of Graduate & Continuing Education Dr. James McDonald.



A rank and file Financial Review Committee elected by members in April recently examined Union finances and authored a report. The committee consisted of (l-r) Bill Cadden, Brian Evjen (Chairman), Dominic Walsh, Rob Buick, Bill Thomas and Rich Wagner.

WWII Mariners' Bill Passes in House

The House of Representatives approved H.R. 23, the Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2009. The bill would establish a Merchant Mariner Equity Compensation Fund and allow merchant mariners who served between December 7, 1941 and December 31, 1946 to receive monthly payments of \$1,000 out of that fund.

Congressman Bob Filner (D-CA), Chairman of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced the bill early in this legislative session. A Senate companion bill has once again been introduced by Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE). S. 663 has been referred to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee. However, Senator Daniel Akaka (D-HI) who chairs the Committee and sets the schedule has not made movement of the bill a priority.

Coast Guard Rule Relieves Credentialing Burden

The Coast Guard published a final rule consolidating the credentials issued to merchant mariners into a single credential and reducing the burden on mariners by limiting the number of times they need to appear in person to provide fingerprints and proof of identity. This is an end result that the M.E.B.A. and maritime labor has been working towards for years.

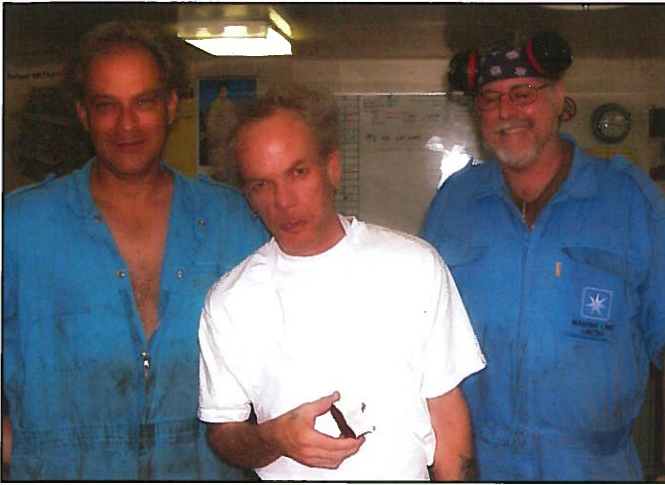
This final rule addresses the comments received from the public in response to the Supplemental Notice of Proposed Rulemaking. A copy of the final rule is available at www.gpoaccess.gov/ft/ (quick search MMC).



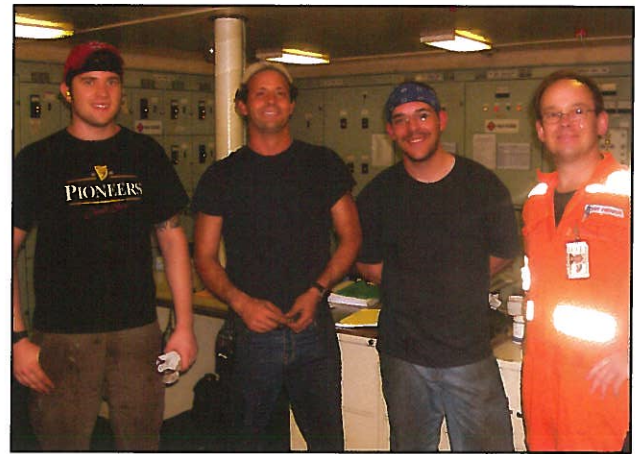
On Maritime Day, M.E.B.A. retiree Waldemar Semenov was awarded with a medal by Transportation Secretary Ray LaHood for distinguished service during combat. Waldemar's WWII story in the Marine Officer captured the imagination of the Smithsonian Museum and the story became part of a new exhibit in the American History maritime wing. Waldemar's ship was torpedoed by a U-boat in 1942. While the vessel was sinking, he ran back to his cabin and changed into his new suit that he didn't want to lose - before leading the crew into a lifeboat. "Tales of WWII: Cool Under Fire" can be viewed online at www.meba.us/Selected-articles.html.

Union Hall Cost Savings

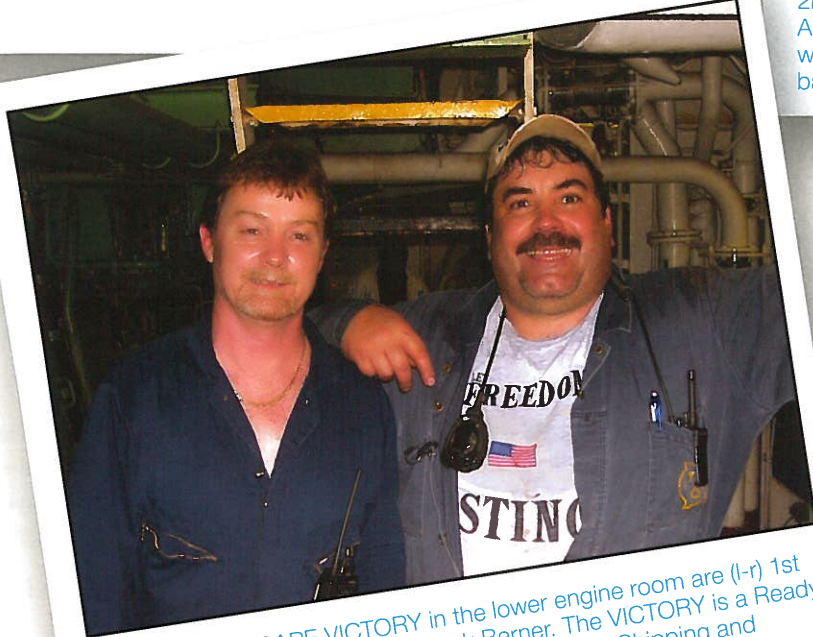
M.E.B.A.'s office in Fort Lauderdale and the Portland Union hall were closed down, effective April 30, 2009. In another move that will result in cost savings, the Baltimore Union hall consolidated into a more economical space within the same building. The address and contact information remain the same but members visiting the hall will go downstairs after walking through the main entrance. The Baltimore M.E.B.A. Clinic's location is unchanged. As a result of the relocation to the smaller space and to promote further cost savings, the monthly membership meetings normally held in Baltimore, MD are now conducted in Easton, MD at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School. The Baltimore/CMES meetings at the School will be conducted on Tuesdays of meeting week - and will be held every



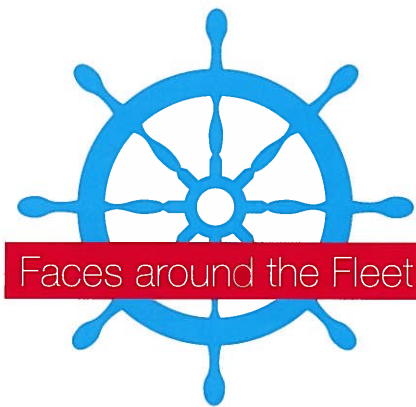
On board the Maersk Line vessel M/V SEALAND METEOR, 3rd A/E Michael Galka, SIU Chief Steward Peter Schmidt and 2nd A/E Peter Elliott take a break from the action.



M.E.B.A. officers aboard the Central Gulf Lines vessel M/V GREEN RIDGE in the control room. Left to right are 2nd A/E Andrew Wormwood, 1st A/E Chris Williams, 3rd A/E Charles Boozer and CE Chris Howard impatiently waiting for the photographer to finish up so they can get back to work.



Aboard the MV CAPE VICTORY in the lower engine room are (l-r) 1st A/E James White and 3rd A/E Frank Berner. The VICTORY is a Ready Reserve Force fleet vessel managed by Keystone Shipping and berthed in Beaumont, TX.



In a short break onboard the M/V SULPHUR ENTERPRISE are (l-r) Port Relief Maintenance Engineer Munawar Karim, 3rd A/E Robert Diaz and Port Relief Maintenance Engineer Reginald Abrams.



Member Jack Engelbrecht sent in this photo of the engine crew aboard the HORIZON HAWK (l-r) Cadet Will Martin, C/E Jeff Engel, 2nd A/E Al Borgen, 3rd A/E Jack Engelbrecht and "the best 1st A/E ever" Mario Benedetti.



He continued with great success until 1985 when he retired. But seawater was still in his blood and he began volunteering his talents to the upkeep of the JOHN BROWN. He worked on the ship's triple expansion reciprocating steam engine and helped keep the vessel in good working order. When the Brown's Chief Engineer John Minor retired in 1994, Cookie took over as Chief. "The JOHN W. BROWN was his life for the last 20 years, from the time he retired until the day he died," said his wife of 59 years, the former Marjorie "Marge" Speicher. Joe Cadden, a retired M.E.B.A. member who was Cookie's assistant and is acting Chief Engineer said, "He was a nice guy in every way and the best engineer I ever worked with during all my years at sea...Cookie had more background knowledge than the average engineer. He was an old reciprocating engine man, and in addition to that was responsible for all the machinery aboard the ship, both electrical and mechanical. It was a tremendous responsibility," he noted. At his request, Brother Cook was cremated and will be buried at sea during a JOHN BROWN voyage to Norfolk, VA in July.



WILLIAM H. EDWARDS

The keys went silent for William H. Edwards on January 11, 2009 at the age of 83. William (Bill) was a member of District No. 3, the Radio Officers' Union (ROU). He was a Merchant Marine veteran of World War II, first setting sail in October 1943 at 18 years of age, serving in the stewards department. His first vessel was the Liberty ship S.S. PETER ZENGER. He also sailed on the Cities Service tanker SS KOOLMOTOR and the T-2 tanker LITTLE BIG HORN during the war. After the cease of hostilities, he was employed for twelve years as a foreman at Consumer's Power Co., Tree Trimming Div. in Flint, Michigan where he'd been born and raised. During the 1960s he was self-employed in Little Rock,

AR., selling and maintaining Electronic Vacuum Tube Testing Machines. While living in Little Rock he taught himself Morse Code and Electronics through a correspondent's course and he received his Radio Telegraph License. In 1968 he returned to life at sea aboard the Sea-Land ship S.S. MAYAGUEZ in the ROU Apprentice program, serving his country again during the Vietnam War. After gaining 20 years of pension credit while sailing with Delta Lines, Panoceanic Tankers, MTL, Waterman, U.S. Lines, Sea-Land, PRM, and Farrell Lines, he retired in 1989 making his last voyage with Farrell Lines on the S.S. RESOLUTE. Brother Edwards enjoyed nearly 20 years of retirement living on the Cheboygan River in Cheboygan, Michigan. He enjoyed boating and fishing on Lake Huron and over the years he owned and restored several large classic wooden Cabin Cruisers from 62 ft. down to 26 ft. He also enjoyed going to the Casinos in the U.P. of Michigan and traveling in his motor home. William is survived by his loving wife Barbara and their three sons Bill (Golda), Nathan (Mary) and Tracy (Kristie). He also has three sons from a previous marriage Terry, Jerry and Christopher, and grandchildren Kimberly, Aaron, Alyssa and Joe. Brother Edwards' son Nathan graduated in the final cadet class at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. School in 1989 and has been sailing in M.E.B.A. Dist #1 for 20 years. Nathan Edwards is 1st Engineer with M.E.B.A. contracted Horizon Lines on the S.S. HORIZON NAVIGATOR.

WILLIAM H. EMERICH

William Emerich awoke to life immortal on December 12, 2008 at the age of 87. He was a longtime member who racked up over 28 years of pension credit during a colorful career working under M.E.B.A. contract for a variety of shipping companies. He last went to sea in 1978 for West Coast Shipping before filing for retirement and settling down in Green Valley, Arizona. Brother Emerich is survived by his wife Violet among others.

JOSEPH L. GALLIOTO

Joe Gallioto departed this world on June 21, 2008 at the age of 83. He suited up as a full member in 1956 and strung together several decades of first-class work en route to collecting over 31 years of pension credit. In 1987, he came back onto the beach from a final sea job with Lykes Brothers before filing for retirement. Brother Gallioto was a resident of Destrehan, LA and is survived by his wife Bernice among others.

ARNALDO R. GARCIA

Arnaldo Garcia made sail for the undiscovered country on January 30, 2008 at the age of 73. His sailing career stretched from 1966 to 1988 with the Union as he pulled in 22 years of pension credit. Brother Garcia was a resident of Asturias in Spain and he is survived by many family and friends including wife Marina and children Suzanne, Alain, Mark and Jonathan.



JOHN GERDE

John Gerde made his final passage on March 20, 2009, at the age of 87. Born in Gjerdsvika, Norway, he came to America in 1924 with his parents, sister and twin brother. Growing up in Portland, Oregon, he attended Benson Technical High School. Both he and his brother became skilled machinists in high school. When the war broke out, he was attending the University of Washington. He then went to work as a machinist in a Seattle shipyard. This was when he started learning about various aspects of ship construction. In July 1943, he spent six weeks in a special training program on the USMTS AMERICAN SAILOR in Long Beach, to receive a QMED rating. He then sailed as an oiler on the MARCHAN MAERSK (Danish motor ship), EWING YOUNG (Liberty Ship), and SEA STAR (C3 troop ship) in the Pacific. In July 1945, he graduated from the US Maritime Service Officer Training School at Alameda, CA, receiving his Third

working on his home, he enjoyed passing on his skills to his son Max. In addition to his wife Carol, Brother Linsky is survived by his son Max; Sister Barbara McCrory; and several other close relatives and friends.



ROBERT W. LITCHFIELD

Robert W. Litchfield sailed off toward his final port call on March 1, 2009 at the age of 70. Bob began sailing with the

Union as a full member in 1959 following his graduation from Massachusetts Maritime Academy. He demonstrated his expertise and reliability in a lengthy and productive career that netted over 38 years of pension credit. Among many other vessels, Chief Litchfield sailed on the CHALLENGER II, the CONSTITUTION, GULF TRADER, and the FAR EAST CLIPPER. Bob accumulated many certifications during his lifetime and continually upgraded his skills at the Calhoun M.E.B.A. Engineering School in Baltimore, MD. He later was licensed by the state of Massachusetts as a refrigeration technician and as an electrician. Bob enjoyed scalloping, hunting, fishing, and loved his time with his family on the beach. He last worked with the Woods Hole fleet in 1999 before taking a well-deserved retirement in 1999. Brother Litchfield was a resident of Edgartown, MA and is survived by his wife of over 50 years Patricia; his son Walter; and Walter's daughters Amy Litchfield, Kristy Litchfield; a daughter Patricia Maciel, her husband Raymond Maciel, and their children Ryan and Alicia; sister Linda Rose Tilton; and several nieces and nephews.

JOHN F. MAHER

John Maher climbed the gangway to the great beyond on July 7, 2008 at the age of 75. John was a member of the Professional Air Traffic Controllers Organization (PATCO), an M.E.B.A. affiliate. From his

first membership in 1952, John showcased a proficiency and knack for getting along with people and soon was serving his union as an elected official. During a long and productive career he netted 28 years of pension credit and took his retirement shortly before Reagan came into office. Brother Maher was a resident of Aiken, South Carolina and leaves behind many family and friends.

ALEX MAJESKY

Alex Majesky steamed into the hereafter on July 29, 2008 at the age of 81. Alex first began shipping out as a member in 1965. He put together decades of hard work and made every one of his 29 years as a member count as he racked up 29 years of pension credit. He last shipped out aboard the SEALAND CONSUMER in 1993, the year he filed for retirement. Brother Majesky was a resident of Central City, Pa and is survived by his wife Louise, son Larry and daughter Karen Majesky.

WILLIAM J. MCKENZIE

William McKenzie set course for calmer waters on March 20, 2009 at the age of 54. Recently retired and enjoying the fruits of his labor, Bill was tragically killed in an auto accident when a 44-year old woman drifted into an oncoming lane of traffic and struck Brother McKenzie's Ford Windstar head-on. Bill McKenzie was a hard working engineer who demonstrated his efficiency for almost 25 years in the Union accumulating almost 23 years of pension credit. He last shipped out in 2001 for Waterman Steamship then settled down in Lake Bluff, IL. He is survived by his wife Rhonda, son Christian, and daughters Jennifer and Lacy as well as many friends.

GEORGE MEIXNER

George Meixner crossed over on December 14, 2004 at the age of 86. George joined the Union at the age of 42 and earned more than 20 years of pension credit sailing for various shipping companies. He last shipped out in 1986 for Lykes Brothers. Brother Meixner was a resident of Weston, WV.

DONALD K. MURRAY

Donald Murray stood his final watch on December 2, 2008 at the age of 79. His M.E.B.A. career began in 1950 and took him around the world many times as he collected 20 years of pension credit while keeping his ships running smoothly. After wrapping up a final voyage with Delta Steamship in 1982, he filed for retirement and settled down in Daly City, CA. Brother Murray is survived by his wife Geneva among others.

FRICIS PABERZS

Fricis Paberzs shipped off toward his final destination on June 24, 2008 at the age of 99. He was born on Feb. 22, 1901 on the shores of the Baltic Sea near Riga, Latvia. His family was engaged in commercial fishing. After graduating from high school, he worked as a seaman. In 1935 he graduated from the Latvian Merchant Marine Academy as an engineer and sailed worldwide on Latvian merchant ships as an engineering officer. At the outbreak of WWII, his ship was docked in New York. The captain refused the order from the Soviet government, then occupying Latvia, to sail for Murmansk and the ship instead remained in the U.S. Shortly thereafter, Mr. Paberzs joined the US Navy. He served throughout the war as a chief machinist's mate aboard troop transports and supply ships in the Pacific Theater. He participated in a number of the island hopping campaigns, including the invasion of Okinawa. After the war, he remained an active member of the Naval Reserve and joined the M.E.B.A. He sailed as an engineering officer for Moore-McCormack Lines and retired as a Chief Engineer in 1973. Along the way, he married the former Marija Kazalovskis, also from Latvia, and settled in Port Washington. He was a member of the Port Washington Masonic Lodge and was the oldest active member of American Legion Post #509. Brother Paberzs is survived by many friends and family.

MAX SHIRLEY

Max Shirley steamed into the hereafter on June 3, 2008 at the age of 80. He first brought his talents to the M.E.B.A. in 1965 and showcased his skills aboard various vessels over the next several decades wrapping up over 22 years of pension credit in 1987. He last shipped out with Amerada Hess aboard the SS CHESAPEAKE in the year of his retirement. Brother Shirley was a resident of Mobile, AL and is survived by his daughter Deborah Torbert among others.

HAROLD S. SHOWALTER

Harold Showalter sailed into the next life on March 21, 2008 at the age of 102. His 36 year retirement from the M.E.B.A. began in 1972 after a successful and fascinating career at sea that netted him 25 years of pension credit. Brother Showalter was a resident of Houston, TX. He is survived by many family and friends.

FRANCIS S. STONE

Francis Stone reached his final shore on November 9, 2008 at the age of 93. He was a member of the Brotherhood of Marine Officers (the BMO pension plan merged into the M.E.B.A. Pension Trust in late 1981). He put together a nice career securing 23 years of pension credit, a slew of friends and many tales of the sea. Brother Stone retired in 1973 and settled down in Middleburg, FL. He is survived by his son Raymond among others.

SHO TAKAHASHI

Sho Takahashi crossed the final bar on August 2, 2008 at the age of 85. His valuable service to his Union and country began in 1954 and he served in peace and war for decades accumulating over 26 years of pension credit. He retired from the sea in 1983. For over 50 years he split his time between two residences, one in Gardena, CA and the other in Santos, Sao Paulo, Brazil. He was an accomplished artist and photographer. He also loved mechanics and tinkering with machinery. He will be dearly missed by all his family and all those who knew him. Sho is survived

by his daughters, Carol Cunha, Patricia Revheim; and son, Leonardo Takahashi; granddaughters Valeria, Vanessa and Vania Cunha. He also leaves behind his sisters Ailo Kamada and Nancy Doi. He also will be fondly remembered by his nieces, nephews, grandnieces, and great-grandniece and nephew. Brother Takahashi joins his wife Marisa in death.

WILLIAM D. TAYLOR

Bill Taylor sailed toward safe haven on May 14, 2008 at the age of 84. He served his country in World War II and made membership soon after the Japanese surrender. Bill continued his impressive seafaring career through two more wars until 1988 when he finally filed for retirement with almost 40 years of pension credit under his belt. Brother Taylor was a resident of Broken Arrow, OK. He is survived by his son Nicholas among many others and joins his wife Esther in death.

JOHN H. THOMAS, JR.

John Thomas reached his journey's end on May 22, 2008 at the age of 61. He began sailing out of M.E.B.A. Union halls in 1979 and he proved a popular member who knew how to get the job done the right way. He last worked under M.E.B.A. contract in 2003 before dropping anchor for the final time and settling down in Long Beach, CA with almost 19 years of pension credit. Brother Thomas is survived by many family and friends and joins his wife Vicki in death.

FRANCIS JOSEPH TONGUE

Frank Tongue sailed toward distant lands on June 23, 2008 at the age of 82. He first turned a wrench as a member in 1951 and pulled in over 33 years of pension credit during a noteworthy career that was characterized by his technical savvy and reliability. Brother Tongue last went to sea for American President Lines in 1985 aboard the PRESIDENT FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT. After earning an impressive 33 years of pension credit, he filed for retirement and hung up his calipers. He was a resident of Anacortes, WA and is survived by his wife Geraldine among others.

ROBERT G. WILSON

Robert Wilson departed this world on April 27, 2008 at the age of 88. He shipped out of Union halls for years upholding the high standard demonstrated by expert M.E.B.A. officers and racking up over 26 years of pension credit in the process. In 1977, he hung up his boiler suit, came in from the sea and settled down in Mobile, AL to enjoy a well-deserved retirement. Brother Wilson is survived by his wife Evelyn among others.

DONALD I. WYMAN

Donald Wyman made his final voyage on July 17, 2008 at the age of 55. He joined up with the Union in 1988 and showcased his skills on a variety of vessels. He was an asset to the Union and for every shipping company he sailed with. He last shipped out with Liberty Maritime in 2005 before stepping onto the beach for good and filing for retirement. Brother Wyman was a resident of Glen Rock, PA and is survived by his wife Cynthia and son Travis among others.

ZLATOJE J. ZERAVICA

Zlatoje Zeravica embarked on his final passage on April 18, 2008 at the age of 90. After serving his country in World War II he continued aiding his nation through Korea and Vietnam as a member of the M.E.B.A. and Fourth Arm of Defense. He amassed 33 years of pension credit while keeping his ships running smoothly. He filed for retirement in 1979 and enjoyed a long retirement that was mainly spent in Daytona Beach, FL. Brother Zeravica is survived by many family and friends and joins his wife Justina in death.

The M.E.B.A. engine team on the MAYAGUEZ, headed by Chief Harrington, consists of First assistant Vernon P. Greenlin, Second Juan P. Sanchez and Thirds Albert C. Minichiello and Alfred J. Rappenecker,

In a follow-up letter to the National M.E.B.A. President, Chief Harrington wrote:

“As you and most of my fellow brothers have probably heard, our vessel the SS MAYAGUEZ recently underwent a trying experience in Cambodia.

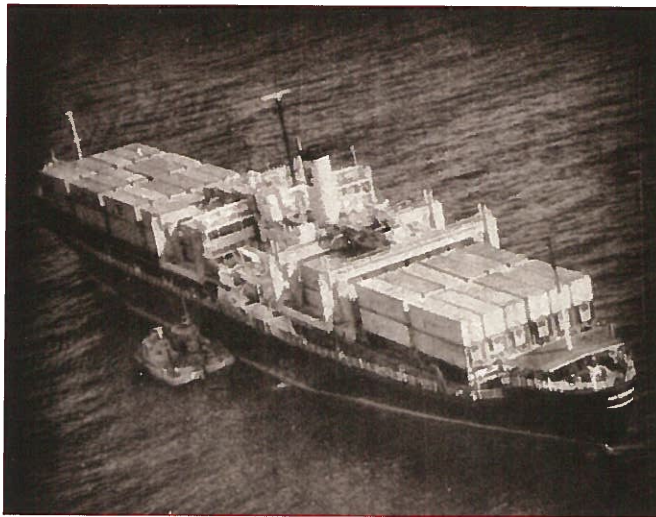
“I sincerely feel I would be remiss if I could not sing the praises of the valiant and truly professional efforts extended by my Assistant Engineers.

“First Assistant Engineer Vern Greenlin, Second Assistant Engineer Juan Sanchez, Third Assistant Engineer Al Rappenecker and Third Assistant Engineer Al Minichiello all displayed the courage and dedication to duty that helped to relieve the strain and tense pressures we were subjected to. I know our brothers would be proud of the manner in which they conducted themselves both on and off the ship.

“I, personally owe them a great deal of gratitude for their assistance during the entire ordeal.”

“You as our President, I know, would join along with me in congratulating them for their conduct and ability in the face of danger, and upholding the true tradition of the United States Merchant Marine.”

The events leading to the recapture of the Sea-Land Service vessel were replete with scenes reminiscent of swashbuckling Barbary pirates. And participating in the rescue operation was an M.E.B.A. engineer.



The MAYAGUEZ was fired upon by Cambodian gunboats in the Gulf of Siam, 60 miles from the Cambodian coast in the early morning hours of May 12. It was forced into port at Koh Tang Island.

When U.S. Marines stormed over the rail of the USS HOLT onto the captured MAYAGUEZ and raised the American flag on May 14, they were accompanied by six Air Force explosive ordinance disposal experts and six civilian crewmen from the Military Sealift Command's USNS GREENVILLE VICTORY.

Among the MSC crewmen was Second Assistant Engineer Michael A. Saltwick, 41, of 36 Upland Avenue, Dorchester, Mass.

While resting at Subic Bay, P.I. following their ship's rescue of some 13,000 Vietnamese refugees in the previous weeks, the MSC men had volunteered to form a skeleton crew to sail the MAYAGUEZ to safety after her recapture.

The MSC mariners flew to Utapao Air Base, Thailand, early on the morning of May 14, where 1,100 U.S. Marines were preparing for the assault on Koh Tang Island where MAYAGUEZ was anchored and where her crew were believed held.

The MSC men joined 20 Marines in one of three helicopters that took off from Utapao.

Crews of the helicopters carrying the boarding party lowered rope ladders to the deck of the USS HOLT and the Marines, Air Force specialists and the six MSC volunteers clambered down.

The HOLT maneuvered close to the MAYAGUEZ and then, with engines at full stop, alongside. The Marines then boarded the MAYAGUEZ. Minutes after they went over the side, the MSC volunteers followed.

Weighted down by heavy flak jackets and combat helmets, Second Assistant Engineer Saltwick, accompanied by oiler Epifanio Rodriguez and Hermino Rivera, a fireman-water tender, made their way to the engine room and after laboring five minutes had the emergency diesel generator running.

In the meantime other MSC crewmen hauled out lines so that the HOLT could tow the ship, and then cut the anchor chain with an acetylene torch.

As the HOLT began to tow the MAYAGUEZ, M.E.B.A. member Saltwick, together with the two other unlicensed engine room personnel, continued to work on the ship's plant.

Later, their mission accomplished, the GREENVILLE VICTORY crewmen were then returned to Sattahip, Thailand, where they reported on the operation and then had a good night's rest.

Rear Admiral Sam H. Moore, commander of Military Sealift Command, congratulated the volunteers for the part they played in the successful rescue of the ship.

In a message to Captain Raymond Iacobacci, master of the GREENVILLE VICTORY, the Admiral said, “I wish to convey to you and Messrs. Harriman (1st Officer); Lonsdale (3rd Officer); Saltwick, Griffin (yeoman/store-keeper), Rodriguez and Rivera my deeply felt appreciation for USNS GREENVILLE VICTORY's immediate response to the Joint Chiefs of Staff request for MAYAGUEZ rescue crew volunteers.”

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