Implementation Already Underway

CMPI 610 Negotiations Conclude, Implementation Already Underway

This article is part of a series describing the Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction (CMPI) 610 negotiations covering the hours of work and premium pay Instruction for CIVMARS working aboard Military Sealift Command (MSC) vessels. As noted previously, this instruction does not impact CIVMAR base wages. The instruction covers only what CIVMARS earn when working during overtime, premium and penalty time aboard MSC vessels.

The SIU and MSC recently completed negotiations over CMPI 610. The completion of negotiations marks the culmination of a roughly two-year process in which the two parties engaged in a series of negotiating sessions using the interest-based bargaining (IBB) method. Also participating in these negotiations were licensed and unlicensed CIVMARS who served as subject matter experts. CIVMARS attended negotiations in person and also participated in the talks via conference call and written surveys. CIVMAR comments and suggestions throughout the negotiation process were extremely helpful, bringing the most up-to-date shipboard experience to the attention of the negotiators. CIVMAR comments helped to frame the new work rules. Additionally, in most of the bargaining sessions, the parties were assisted by several FMCS Mediators. This was especially helpful when the negotiations entered the most difficult phases.

Concurrent negotiations between MSC, the Marine Engineers’ Beneficial Association (MEBA) and the International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P), the unions representing the agency’s licensed CIVMARS, also have concluded. MSC Commander Rear Admiral Mark Buzby delivered the completed Instruction to the Office of Civilian Human Resources (OCHR) who reviewed and approved the document for the Secretary of the Navy. The Instruction has an October 2012 implementation date.

As the negotiations concluded, the parties conducted a thorough financial analysis to ensure, as accurately as possible, that the financial negotiation goals noted below would be met. Much earlier, at the start of negotiations, the parties adopted detailed ground rules and goals to guide them through the difficult and complicated bargaining and implementation process.

Additionally, as this is the first time in a quarter century that the entire Instruction has been revised, certain protections were agreed to and will go into effect as the Instruction is implemented. Both of these topics are discussed in greater detail below.

Negotiation Goals

The goals of the negotiations were to:
1. Ensure that CIVMARS would be fairly compensated by the new work rules;
2. Ensure that the changes would be cost-neutral for MSC. This means that MSC would not have to pay much more money to implement the rule changes or save significant amounts of money by cutting pay through work rule changes;
3. Develop work rules that would be applied fairly and consistently on every vessel;
4. Streamline the instruction, to delete repetitive, confusing and inconsistent language that was found throughout the previous Instruction;
5. Develop work rules covering unlicensed CIVMARS which could be applied whenever possible to both coasts; and
6. Develop a document that is easy to read and allows CIVMARS to find the information they are looking for quickly and efficiently.

Program Protections

The protections built into the implementation of the new CMPI 610 include reviewing CIVMAR feedback and other shipboard documents as well as evaluating payrolls in a timely manner to ensure that CIVMAR wages have not been impacted significantly – in a negative or positive way, or in a way that was not anticipated by the parties. The SIU and MSC have also agreed to meet yearly to review the financial impact of the rules for the next five years.

As in the previous CMPI 610 there is a mechanism to dispute or grieve a situation where a CIVMAR believes he or she has not been paid accurately for the overtime or premium pay work performed.

There will also be a process to advise the union and the agency if a CIVMAR believes that a specific work rule has resulted in significant pay loss. Once this is brought to the attention of the union and MSC, the parties will reconvene to determine whether the new rule creating the impact needs to be revised.

The new rules will have to be implemented for several months before CIVMARS, the SIU and MSC will be able to determine whether there is a significant impact one way or the other. This is because premium pay

Continued on Page 4
In Debate Over Union Rights

ized workers. When compared to their non-union counterparts, union workers can certainly attest to the benefits of being part of the SIU family. Our members may have the money, but unions have the passion. Both agree that higher economic benefits that come with it.

That shows how important it is to tackle anti-union efforts head on.

As more people hear about what unions really mean to workers and the economy, support for anti-union tactics and politicians will fade. The reason anti-union forces have spent millions—possibly billions—of dollars demonizing unions is because it’s a lot harder to convince people of a lie than to simply tell the truth. It takes a lot of money to get falsehoods to stick. Unions have the money, these forces hope to convince working people into thinking that higher wages and better benefits are against their interests.

This tactic comes from corporations at a time when profits have never been higher. It’s no coincidence that the salaries of CEOs have skyrocketed over the last 30 years, while union membership has dropped. Seeing what they perceive to be vulnerability in the labor movement, corporations have increased their efforts to reduce the rights of workers as a way of ensuring profits and executive compensation continue on their upward trajectory.

They then attempt to convince those same non-union workers that their diminished wages and benefits are the fault of unions guaranteeing higher wages and benefits to their members, not the executives who lowered workers’ wages while raising their own. This strategy works to demonize unions while turning non-union workers’ dissatisfaction over stagnant wages and benefits away from those who are actually responsible:

The SIU is addressing continued computer access problems for CIVMARS. From answering employment-related questions on issues such as security clearances, promotions and safety, to helping CIVMARS who have received disciplinary charges from MSC, the SIU works on many policy issues. Here is a partial list of what the union is working on right now to help its members.

| CPMI 330 | This is a common section of the Civilian Marine Personnel Instruction, like CPMI 610, however it applies to policy for MSC CIVMARS. |
| CIVMAR uniforms | MSC is looking at requiring federal mariners to wear uniform. The SIU will negotiate certain elements such as who will pay, what the uniform will consist of and how CIVMARS will get them. |
| OCONUS hotel standards | The SIU and MSC will negotiate hotel standards that ensure CIVMARS who are assigned hotels outside the United States will not be placed in inadequate quarters. |
| Fall protection | The SIU will negotiate a policy for fall protection. MSC has indicated it will apply a weight limit for CIVMARS who may need to go aloft using fall protection harnesses. |
| Off-duty comp time | MSC has not provided compensation for CIVMARS traveling during off-duty hours. The SIU will address this and work to get compensation for CIVMARS. |
| Relief system | SIU is negotiating with MSC to develop a more effective and expedited relief system to ensure CIVMARS who apply for relief can leave the vessel in a timely manner. |

On the customer so our armed forces benefit; enabling the agency’s work force; focusing on the customer so our armed forces benefit; maintaining a strong U.S. maritime industry that’s critical to our continued leadership in a world that depends on the seas and the maritime trade,” he continued. “None of it will happen without U.S. Mariners manning the lines.”

In a separate speech of his own to the 2012 SIUNA Convention, retired Vice Adm. Al Herberger, who served as deputy commander of the U.S. Transportation Command, also praised the work of U.S. Mariners.

President Luther Seward. “The desire of government employees for fair and impartial treatment was felt as strongly in the public sector as it was the private sector.

It’s been a busy year for the union representing unlicensed mariners at NOAA, ACOE, MSC and MARAD. In addition to the successful CPMI 610 negotiations that resulted in a simpler, more effective at-sea payment system for CIVMARS, the SIU also helped ACOE win a new contract all while continuously fighting for fair treatment of government employees.

From 1990 to 2008, productivity increased 75 percent while income increased only 22.6 percent. If it weren’t for the large drop in union membership during that period, median wages would be nearly 43 percent higher than they are today.

By corporations and the candidates they support to convince people that unions are actually responsible.

While unions provide the money, these forces hope to convince working people that higher wages and better benefits are against their interests.

By unions guaranteeing higher wages and benefits to their members, not the executives who lowered workers’ wages while raising their own. This strategy works to demonize unions while turning non-union workers’ dissatisfaction over stagnant wages and benefits away from those who are actually responsible:

To answer the accompanying sidebar to see the issues the SIU is currently working on for unlicensed CIVMARS.

The commander of the U.S. Military Sea- lift Command (MSC) reminded delegates at the Seafarers International Union of North America convention that America’s military depends on a strong, re- liable U.S. Merchant Marine.

The commander said he also recently ap- proved the agency’s strategic plan for the next five years – and the convention dele- gates were the first people outside of MSC to hear about it. Buzby said the plan identifies four “high-level goals,” including providing task-ready ships, developing, enhancing and enabling the agency’s work force; focusing on the customer so our armed forces benefit; maintaining a strong U.S. maritime industry that’s critical to our continued leadership in a world that depends on the seas and the maritime trade,” he continued. “None of it will happen without U.S. Mariners manning the lines.”

This is a revised agreement covering thousands of U.S. Merchant Mariners.

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Continued on Page 3
They do jobs of vital importance to the American people, but the nation’s 2.6 million federal civilian workers are being “substantially” underpaid in the name of deficit reduction, the AFL-CIO Executive Council said in a recent statement.

Referring to the fact that federal workers earn an average of 24 percent less than their private-sector counterparts, the council said federal employees are simply forced to sacrifice too much. Federal workers are the ones who authorize Social Security and Medicare benefits, enforce wage and safety standards and provide support to the military, among many other duties.

“Federal employees are substantially underpaid for this important work,” the council said in a statement that was released in early August, adding the problem doesn’t just apply to wages. “Their health insurance is also less generous than that provided by large firms in the private sector.”

While pressure to reduce the deficit has resulted in an unprecedented two-year pay freeze for federal workers, the council said many of the most successful private-sector workers have not been asked to make any sacrifices of their own.

Instead, the council added, federal workers have been unfairly forced to shoulder an economic burden that isn’t being asked of anyone at the top of the economic food chain anymore.

“It is often said there must be ‘shared sacrifice’ to reduce the deficit, but it hardly makes sense as ‘shared sacrifice’ when nobody else shares in the pain,” the council said. “If the federal employees, millionaires, billionaires, Wall Street firms and the 1 percent have not been asked to do this one thing…”

Sen. Ben Cardin (D-Md.) echoed similar sentiments in a statement issued to commemorate the Labor Day Holiday. Cardin, who represents more than 256,000 public-sector workers, said he’s alarmed by the anti-worker rhetoric in Washington, particularly against public-sector workers. Facing pressure to reduce the deficit, Congress has put an unprecedented two-year freeze on federal workers and limited other benefits.

“Enough is enough! Our public-sector workforce is the best in the world and they deserve to be supported and out gratify for making our nation the greatest in the world,” Cardin said. “I am fighting to put an end to the blame game that targets public sector workers for political gain.”

Sacrifices by federal employees have already produced $60 billion in projected budget savings over the next 10 years. A planned 2013 pay adjustment could raise that number to more than $100 billion.

That’s particularly alarming, the council said, when it comes to what federal contractors are allowed to earn. The council concluded the statement voicing to fight any further assaults on the wages and benefits of federal workers. “All efforts to privatize, outsource, reduce, undermine, politicize, underpay, or undervalue the work performed on behalf of the American people by our federal workforce should be vigorously opposed,” the council wrote.

The SIU is an AFL-CIO affiliate, and SIU President Michael Sacco is the longest-serving member on the federation’s executive council.
CIVMARS Asked to Carefully Read New Instruction

Continued from Page 1

varies from vessel to vessel. Additionally, while a few of the old rules which have been eliminated may diminish pay under certain circumstances, this change may be offset by the addition of new rules which will now provide pay to CIVMARS for previously uncompensated work. CIVMAR comments and financial data will help the parties with this evaluation.

Organization of New CMPI 610

While the new CMPI 610 still contains a majority of the rules in the old instruction, the new instruction is noticeably shorter. CIVMARS will find that the language is much more concise compared to the previous instruction. The new CMPI 610 is user-friendly and logically organized. It is designed to enable the reader to quickly and definitely answer practically any question regarding a CIVMAR's hours of work and premium pay.

The new CMPI 610 is also organized in a way that is entirely different from the previous instruction. The new CMPI 610 is organized by type of work or work event. This section covers several scenarios when any CIVMAR, regardless of department, handles or moves any type of item deemed to be cargo. In the previous document, pay provisions regarding cargo were located in several different sections. This required a review of multiple pages and referring to several sections to analyze the cargo work rules.

Many CIVMARS advised negotiators that the language could be confusing and contradictory. In response to these concerns, negotiators included a language pertaining to a specific rule or evolution of work into a specific section. The document now contains a detailed, cross-referenced index which will help CIVMARS quickly locate any CMPI 610-related information they need.

West Coast CIVMAR Bosun Mate Bob Hoffman, who participated in the CMPI negotiations, thought such clarity was very important. The CMPI 610's new language, he said, was put on an end to having to "fight the same fights year after year" over payment provisions.

That’s not much but good news, added East Coast Deck Department Mariner Marque Anthony, who also participated in the CMPI negotiations and saw improvement in the new instruction...

Thousands in Savings and Aid for Union Members Available Through Union Plus

Potentially, thousands of dollars in financial aid and savings are waiting for MSC, NOAA MARAD and AGC new rule service mariners who are members of the SIU. Union President Representative Valerie Cole told the 2012 Seafarers International Union of North America Convention Sept. 11. Those members just have to reach out and grab it.

"Union Plus programs help your members buy their homes, ensure their futures, travel for less and send their children to college," Cole said as she addressed the gathering of convention delegates, union officials and unlicensed apprentices at the Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education in Pinet Point, Md.

"Hard-working union members and their families deserve unique value, fair terms and exceptional service," he added.

Since its founding by the AFL-CIO in 1986, Union Plus has used the collective bargaining power of unions to provide discounted products and services to union members. Currently, the program offers more than 40 benefits in categories ranging from housing and health care to higher education and entertainment.

"That is the power of belonging to a union," Cole said.

Union Plus has been especially valuable to members in recent years, as the Great Recession has resulted in widespread job losses and financial strain. Union Plus has spent more than $1.4 billion the last few years to help members who faced financial hardships. More than $9 million of that went to mortgage assistance for members facing foreclosure on their homes.

"In times of job loss and medical emergency and financial hardship we offer a helping hand," Cole said. "It helps members keep homes if they lose their job, become disabled or can’t work."

Aside from helping distressed homeowners, Union Plus also helps those buying homes find competitive mortgage rates and savings on closing costs. First-time homeowners get even more assistance.

Union Plus also offers grants for members who are saving for their children’s higher education and deep discounts on college preparation courses. Members can take advantage of massive savings on clothing, travel and entertainment and cellphone service as well.

The benefits available through Union Plus run the gamut from discounts for gym memberships and rental cars to savings on AT&T无线 monthly phone bills. In addition, union members who utilize Union Plus benefits have access to a prescription discount card, a credit card, and even a discount for a Hawaiian cruise aboard the NCL Pride of America – a vessel that is crewed by SIU members. Union Plus also provides assistance for major purchases, such as mortgages and other loans.

Taking advantage of the various offers presented by Union Plus not only helps save money, but it also helps support businesses that hire union workers. That’s an important consideration in any era, but especially during the current economic climate.

“It’s all about the philosophy of “delivering savings, service and solidarity,” Cole said. “That’s our foundation and we’ve been building on it ever since.”

All members in good standing of the SIU are entitled to apply for Union Privilege and Union Plus benefits. For more information about the programs, SIU members are encouraged to contact their union representatives or visit the Union Plus website: www.unionplus.org.

Federal Mariners: Update Your E-Address Book!

SIU Government Services Division members should note that there’s a new email address for contacting your union. The new address is siufedmariner@seafarers.org, and it replaces the old civmarsupport@seafarers.org.

Contact Information
Assistant Vice President Government Services Chet Wheeler: cwwheeler@seafarers.org
Government Fleet Representative Kate Hunt: khatt@seafarers.org
Government Fleet Representative Maurice Cokes: rcookes@seafarers.org
For contact with SIU: siufedmariner@seafarers.org
For CMPI 610-related questions: mscmp610@gmail.com
Find us on Facebook: www.seafarers.org
Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/seafarersunion

Mariners aboard the USNS William McLean learn about the CMPI Instruction’s new provisions and policies.

Federal Mariner OCTOBER–DECEMBER 2012 4