Against Identity Theft, Ensure Credit Rating and Security Clearances Remain Safe

ACOE, MSC, NOAA, SUISAN Bay Reserve Fleet Employees Must Take Action to Protect

Part of the background investigation, user names and passwords you may have used to fill out the forms may have been breached.

Vessel Christenings Signal New Jobs for Mariners

A pair of vessel christenings earlier this year signified new jobs for members of the SIU Government Service Division.

On July 9, OPM announced that the personal data of 21.5 million people have been compromised including 26.7 million people (current and former employees, job applicants and contractors) who applied for a background checks. On July 10, OPM Director Katherine Archuleta resigned from her position as a result of the scandal.

This breach is also believed to impact spouses, partners or co-habitants of applicants whose names and personal information were provided in the course of a background check. The type of information which has been compromised in the two incidents include Social Security numbers, date of birth, place of birth, residency history, and other information which may have been included as part of your background check (health, criminal and financial information). Employment history and fingerprints if you were required to provide them as part of your background check may have also been compromised. As part of the background investigation, user names and passwords you may have used to fill out the forms may have been breached.

Your agency and/or OPM are supposed to be contacting you via e-mail and or mail to inform you about the impact and about signing up for identity theft insurance. For employees impacted by the first breach (those involving personnel records), OPM has advised that you are automatically enrolled in full-service identity restoration which helps repair your identity should the information breach be used for fraudulent activity. Also, identity theft insurance will reimburse you for certain expenses if your identity is stolen.

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The new JHSV is the fourth ship named Brunswick, since the seaport city located on the southeast coast of Georgia. That city played an important role during World War II as the site of a 415-acre shipyard that employed up to 16,000 workers at its peak. The yard produced 99 Liberty ships by the end of the war.

Brunswick is the result of the successful industry/ DOD partnership that has developed between Austral USA, USA, Military Sealift Command, and the Navy," said Craig Periccia, president of Austra USA. "We’re very excited about how stable and mature the JHSV program has become as we prepare delivery of our first ship and delivery in the fall."

Meanwhile, like its sister ships, the Brunswick is a 338-foot, shallow-draft aluminum catamaran described by the builder as “a multi-mission, non-combatant transport vessel characterized by its high volume, high speed, and flexibility. The Brunswick displays American values of community, hospitality and resourcefulness at their very best,” said Secretary Mabus at the ceremony. "I chose to name the joint high-speed vessel after Brunswick to honor those values and the men and women of the city, as well as the state of Georgia."

The sixth of 10 joint high-speed vessels (JHSV) built for the U.S. Navy – the USNS Brunswick – was christened May 9 at the Austal USA shipyard in Mobile, Alabama. Additionally, a ceremony for the mobile landing platform (MLP) USNS Lewis B. Puller took place Feb. 7 at General Dynamics NASSCO (union shipyard), with SIU Assistant Vice President Chet Wheeler in attendance.

Commandant of the Marine Corps Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr., delivered the principal address at the Puller christening, along with fellow speakers Rear Adm. Thomas Shannon, commander of the Military Sealift Command (MSC), Vice Adm. Joseph Aucocis, deputy chief of naval operations for warfare systems, and Aliston Stiller, deputy assistant secretary of the Navy for ships.

The Puller is expected to be used as an afloat forward staging base.

Martha Puller Downs, daughter of ship’s namesake, the late Lewis B. Puller, served as the vessel’s sponsor and broke the ceremonial champagne bottle against the hull. Downs said that her father would have wanted her to specifically thank the thousands of welders, electricians, painters and other workers who built the ship. And she said it will serve as a fitting remembrance of Puller, who enjoys a legendary status in the Marine Corps.

"This ceremony not only honors a true Marine hero and legend, but also the men and women who have worked so diligently to bring this ship from concept to reality," said Secretary of the Navy Ray Mabus the day before the event. "It is because of their efforts that the future USNS Lewis B. Puller will enable our maritime forces to accomplish myriad missions while operating forward just as Chesty did throughout his nearly 40-year career."

The USNS Lewis B. Puller will honor Lt. Gen. Lewis "Chesty" Burwell Puller, one of the most decorated Marines in the Corps, and the only Marine ever to receive the Navy Cross five times for heroism and gallantry in action. A Marine officer and enlisted man for 37 years, L.G. Puller served as a warrant officer in the Corps for an additional 40 years. Puller served World War II as the site of a 415-acre shipyard that employed up to 16,000 workers at its peak. The yard produced 99 Liberty ships by the end of the war.

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Members of the SIU Government Services Division came to the rescue May 14 when a disabled sailboat began taking on water some 50 miles off the coast of Ocean City, Maryland. Shortly after 6 a.m., Seafarers and other mariners aboard the Military Sealift Command dry cargo/am
munition ship USNS William McLean (T-AKE-12) received a distress call from a sailboat, the SV Solarus. The McLean was only about 10 minutes away
when the two boaters reported that their craft was taking on more water than their bilge could pump out. The McLean sailed towards the disabled boat while contacting the United States Coast Guard and apprising them of the situation.

Once the cargo ship was on the scene, the Solarus reported a two-foot long crack in the hull. The Hudson was only about 10 minutes away and with
the Solarus’ crew to patch their two-foot hole and dewater their vessel. I commend you for your professionalism and flexibility.”

The captain also praised the efforts of the mariners, saying, “The crew performed flawlessly and was ready to go on ‘no notice’ to help out the two mariners and their sailboat.”
CIVMAR NOTES

CMPI 610 Printed Copies For SIU Dues-Paying Members

One of the most significant accomplishments of the last five years was the negotiation of the revised CMPI 610 – Hours of Work and Premium Pay. An excellent understanding of the rules that ensure that CMPI 610 will be paid fairly and correctly every time you earn overtime, premium pay and penalty pay. MSC chose not to supplement the new contract, and distributed when the instruction was properly implemented.

Currently, the CMPI 610 is supposed to be accessible on the vessel computer systems and available for unlicensed CIVMARS to review. However, not all unlicensed CIVMARS are able to view the document. For much easier and less time-consuming access, the SIU has re-printed the CMPI 610 and is making it available to SIU dues-paying members.

The documents will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis. After all the copies of CMPI 610 have been distributed the union will determine whether more will be printed this year. They are being distributed at the CSSIs. If you’d like to have a copy sent to your ship or your home, email your SIU Government Services Division representative. Please include your mailing address and your union book number.

Retro Comp-Time-for-Travel Update

As has been reported in previous issues of the Federal Mariner, CIVMARS working for MSC between 2008 and now are entitled to a retroactive Comp Time for Travel benefit. The SIU is negotiating with MSC for a retroactive benefit and we hope the issue will be resolved by the end of the year. CIVMARS will be updated as the negotiations continue.

Understanding Your Benefits and How to Secure Them

A significant benefit of being an SIU dues-paying member is the opportunity to access a $4,000 Life Insurance Benefit. While the SIU does not think that accidents and illnesses occur and protecting your family in a time of crisis and loss is a very important issue.

Over the past 12 months the SIU has been notified of the untimely deaths of several mariners in the SIU Government Services fleet. Unfortunately, some mariners did not have beneficiary cards on file, making distribution of the benefit more complicated for their surviving family members.

In addition to the life insurance benefits, as an SIU dues-paying member, in the event of a federal mariner’s death, your survivors may also call the SIU legal department to get guidance and advice about issues and topics that are of importance to all our Government Services units. Please send your comments, pictures and requests for coverage to:

Submissions Wanted

Attention all ACOE, NOAA, SBRF-MARAD and MSC federal mariners; Your work on behalf of our government is vital. Your union appreciates all you do in your workplace and on behalf of our nation.

We want your voices to be heard! We want to make sure we are writing about issues and topics that are of importance to our Government Services clients. Please send your comments, pictures and requests for coverage to:

OPM Data Breach Affects Millions

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Again, according to OPM if you have been impacted by part of the larger breach you will have had your social security number, military service records, and other personal information stolen. In anticipation of growing vessel traffic in the Arctic, the SIU is negotiating with MSC for a retroactive benefit and we hope the negotiations continue.

We will do our best to print your photos and publish articles based on your submissions. Your work on behalf of our government is vital. Keep an eye out for your notification package from OPM and/or your agency. We are forward-deployed and please look at the directions to change your pin number.

If you are forward-deployed ask someone at home to look for this important mail.

OMS Data Breach Affects Millions

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What You Can Do Now

If you are a Federal Mariner in and subsequent issues of the Federal Mariner, the SIU encouraged members to remain vigilant about identity theft and protecting yourself while online. Here is some guidance from past articles and from other sources:

- www.usagurudueonline.gov Created by a 16-agency partnership to protect federal workers from identity theft and contains many other useful articles.

- www.IdentityTheft.gov To learn how to set up protections and get a free credit report.

- Change your logins and passwords for your TSP account. To request a PIN, login to the TSP via the TSP Online Line (1-877-968-3778). Follow the directions to change your pin number.

- If you have used one login and password for all other important accounts change those as well. Try to develop passwords that contain numbers and alphabetical characters along with special characters. Don’t try to use the same password for your accounts.

- Keep an eye out for your notification package from OPM and/or your agency. If you are forward-deployed ask someone at home to look for this important mail.

For MSC forward-deployed mariners the SIU has already proposed that once a forward-deployed CIVMARS register for the OPM credit protections. These negotiations are ongoing.

We will do our best to print your photos and publish articles based on your submissions. Your work on behalf of our government is vital. Please be active. Stay involved. Support the Federal Mariner and your union!
According to a new Economic Policy Institute (EPI) study, the most recent data confirms what the SIU and other labor unions have always known. In states with so-called right-to-work (RTW) laws, wages are lower than in states without such laws. The study concludes that the relationship between RTW states and lower wages is still statistically significant, even after controlling for various demographic and occupational variables.

The EPI is a respected, non-partisan think tank based in Washington, D.C. RTW laws allow non-dues-paying workers many of the benefits of representation without doing their part to help support the union. That, means, for example, a non-dues-paying employee benefits from the same medical coverage negotiated by the union for everyone in the bargaining unit. Similarly, if a worker who doesn’t pay dues were to have a grievance, the union would have to take up that beef, using union resources just as they would for a dues-paying member.

There are 23 RTW states, primarily in the mid-west south and southwest.

A similar system of representation is used throughout the federal government for civil service employees – including federal mariners. An SIU team represents mariners in four agencies: SBSAN Bay Reserve Fleet, ACOE, NOAA and MSC. Employees who do not pay union dues receive some of the same benefits that dues-paying members receive as the result of a federal law. Additional benefits – representational and financial – are available to SIU dues-paying members. According to the findings by Senior Economist and Director of Health Policy Research Elise Gould, Ph.D., and Research Asst- sistant Will Kuhbahl, wages in states with RTW laws are 3.1 percent lower than those in non-RTW states. That translates to an average of $13,558 less per year, but could mean much more in some areas.

The findings also confirm an earlier study that proved the benefits of unions extend beyond their members. On a state-wide level, wages were higher in non-RTW states, and not just for union members. As stated in the report, “Where unions are strong, compensation increases even for workers not covered by any union contract, as non-union employers face competitive pressure to match union standards. Likewise, when unions are weakened by RTW laws, all of a state’s workers feel the impact.” In conclusion, the report found that even after factoring in all reasonably possible outside variables, the correlation between lower wages in RTW states and the law was undeniable.

In our industry, federal mariner wages are developed using the wage rates negotiated in collective bargaining contracts for private-sector seafarers. In the past the SIU has provided information to mariners about the link between the private maritime industry and federal-sector wages. We will continue to do so in future articles and meetings with mariners.

“It’s abundantly clear that right-to-work laws are negatively correlated with workers’ wages,” says Gould. “Our model uses widely-agreed upon variables, and holds up under a series of tests to ensure that the model is sound and not being skewed by the inclusion or exclusion of particular variables or estimate technique.”

The study is part of the Economic Policy Institute’s Raising America’s Pay project, a multiyear research and public education initiative to make wage growth a national policy priority. Raising America’s Pay seeks to explain wage and benefit patterns—and the role of labor market policies and practices in suppressing pay—and identify policies that will generate broad-based wage growth.

Editor’s note: The RTW study also includes this summary, which addresses whether such laws truly are about freedom or more about stopping employees from engaging in their rights to have strong union representation:

Corporate labor advocates RTW with the goal of restricting unions. There are many organizations that, like unions, require membership dues.

For instance, condominium or homeowners associations similarly require dues of their members.

A homeowner can’t choose to live in a condominium development without paying the association fees.

Yet the national corporate lobby supporting RTW are not proposing a “right to live where you want” law. They are focused solely on restricting employees’ organizations.

Unions in RTW states are the only organizations in the country forced to provide benefits for free, and banned from requiring those who enjoy the benefits to pay their fair share of the costs of creating them.

Indeed, employer associations themselves refuse to live by the same rules they seek to impose on unions.

In Owensboro, Kentucky, the local Building Trades Council decided to withdraw its membership in the local chapter of Commerce, but asked if it could still receive full member benefits even though it would no longer be paying dues. Absolutely not, answered the Chamber.

“It would be against Chamber by-laws and policy to consider any organization or business a member without dues being paid. The vast majority of the Chamber’s annual revenues come from member dues, and it would be unfair to the other 850-plus members to allow an organization not paying dues to be included in member benefits.”

This, then, appears to be the true aim of RTW, and may explain why some corporate lobbies continue advocating for it even though it doesn’t make sense as an economic policy and it hurts workers. It appears that the main goal of RTW may be not to create jobs or give workers more freedom, but instead to make it harder for workers to have an effective voice in negotiating with their employer.

All federal mariners gain benefits with participation in a workplace with effective unions. You can make a difference. You can protect yourself and contribute to the collective good. Support the SIU — yourself and your shipmates — with your membership.

Here’s one more thing Union families can share.

Save on education expenses with Union Plus. The rising cost of higher education can be a real barrier to union families who want the best for their kids. Union Plus offers annual scholarship awards, discounts on college counseling, plus grants to help erase college loan debt. Don’t let money complicate your family’s college goals. Turn to Union Plus for help.

Want to know more? Download the Union Plus mobile app.