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Unions File Restriction Grievance

Three unions including the SIU have teamed up to formally protest the manner in which federal mariners have been restricted to their respective vessels during the pandemic.

The outcome of the grievance may not be known until near the end of this year or early next year. Arbitration or a settlement are possible.

"Our members have made many sacrifices because of their role as essential workers," stated SIU Vice President Government Services Kate Hunt. "They deserve fair treatment, and the union will do everything possible to ensure it."

In mid-April, the SIU issued the following statement:

The Seafarers International Union (SIU) joins with our Brothers and Sisters in the Masters, Mates & Pilots (MM&P) and the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association in the spirit

and intention of the grievance they have filed against Military Sealift Command regarding the imposition of a disparate "Gangways Up" order issued on March 21, 2020 for all MSC/CIVMAR-crewed vessels. Therefore, in accordance with Article VII, Section 6 of the Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) between the SIU and MSC, the SIU files the following Union/Management grievance on behalf of all unlicensed CIVMARS adversely impacted by the Restriction-to-Ship Order. The order blatantly violates the terms and conditions of the 1997 Memorandum of Understanding between MSC and Maritime Labor. The SIU recognizes that MSC has latitude to restrict crews in certain situations, however, in accordance with Section C. of the MOU, those situations are limited, as follows:

"C. During a period when the senior U.S. military or senior U.S. Navy Commander or

their duly authorized designee in an overseas theatre of operation determines that a credible security threat exists **for all U.S. Department of Defense employees** in a particular overseas port."

For MSC to allow open shipboard access to all other personnel (to include Navy, shipyard workers, numerous government contractors, foreign nationals, other shoreside workers, etc.) while restricting the CIVMAR crews is a complete violation of the MOU. In addition, allowing all other persons to come and go freely aboard USNS and USS-CIVMAR-crewed ships during this pandemic is ineffective and dangerous to the safety and health of the CIVMAR crews and contrary to MSC's stated reason for imposing the restriction which was to protect the CIVMARs'."

Numerous discussions with MSC management have not produced an acceptable

resolution to this conflict. Therefore, the SIU submits this grievance on behalf of all unlicensed CIVMARS on every CIVMAR-crewed ship worldwide for the period beginning with the issuance of the "Gangways Up" order on March 21, 2020 and continuing through the period when the restriction order is lifted.

As remedy, and in accordance with the terms and conditions of CMPI 630, the SIU is seeking the payment of penalty pay for all off-duty hours an unlicensed CIVMAR was restricted to the ship and not allowed liberty.

The SIU recognizes we are living through extraordinary and distressing times and we support all reasonable efforts to keep the CIVMAR crews safe, but this restriction is not achieving that goal and is causing extreme distress to the unlicensed members we represent. We are available at any time to discuss settlement of this matter.

Maritime Industry Continues Grappling with COVID Challenges

Editor's note: SIU members are encouraged to regularly check the union's website for the latest union-specific news about the pandemic. There is a prominent COVID-19 section on the home page. Members also may sign up for text alerts by texting the word "join" (without the quotation marks) to 97779.

The American maritime industry seemingly mirrored the nation at large from mid-June to mid-July when it came to combatting the COVID-19 pandemic. The coronavirus surged in numerous states, and it hit home for the union, too.

As of July 14, there had been more than 3.4 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the U.S. and more than 138,000 deaths. Worldwide, those figures were more than 13.1 million cases and at least 571,000 deaths.

The vast majority of the SIU- and CIVMAR-crewed fleets are still operating, as Seafarers live up to their federally designated role as essential workers. But, SIU members from several ships and ATBs recently contracted COVID-19, as did at least a couple of crew members from tugboats. New cases were reported aboard the CIVMAR-crewed *USNS Grumman*. (A crew member from the *Grumman* became the first known American mariner to die from the coronavirus. Though not a union member, Joseph Bondoc was part of the unlicensed crew. He was one of more than 20 crew members diagnosed with COVID-19 while the vessel was in a Boston shipyard. A contractor from that same yard also died from the virus.) At least two SIU employees and one employee of the SIU-affiliated United Industrial Workers (UIW) were diagnosed with the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

The uptick in cases caused three hiring halls to close for precautionary reasons within a couple of weeks after they'd reopened June 15. At press time, the halls in Jersey City, New Jersey and Wilmington, California, had again reopened; the hall in Houston was expected to reopen soon.

Perhaps the most prominent recent instance of shipboard COVID-19 in the U.S.-flag fleet occurred in late June, aboard the *Maersk Idaho*. Eleven mariners, including five SIU members, tested positive. One crew member was hospitalized but recovered. Thankfully, the other mariners who tested positive experienced few or no symptoms.

Within the industry, Maersk was hailed for its quick, comprehensive plan to safely vacate the crew, move them to a quarantine facility, professionally clean the vessel, and then bring on a new crew. They worked with the Coast Guard, medical professionals and other authorities to ensure diligence, efficiency and safety. The SIU also worked closely with the crew and company to provide support and to secure additional testing for crews on other American-flag Maersk ships.

Weeks later, all concerned received an unwelcome reminder that even the best plans, no matter how well-executed, cannot ensure total safety from the virus. At least a couple of the replacement crew members tested positive, so the vessel went into a quarantined state at a Florida anchorage.

Despite the challenges, there were positive developments as well. They included a return to work for many Seafarers employed by NY Waterway, which operates passenger ferries between New York and New Jersey. The

company's waterborne operations essentially shut down when those states were at their combined nadir.

Additionally, and following months of intensive preparation, the SIU-affiliated Paul Hall Center for Maritime Training and Education was scheduled to reopen Aug. 1. The school (located in Piney Point, Maryland) initially scheduled several upgrading courses and plans to resume training apprentices in September.

Moreover, most of the hiring halls stayed open without interruption, as members and staff easily adjusted to new safety protocols. Those steps include the by-now-standard face coverings, social distancing, temperature checks, hand sanitizing, and use of protective barriers.

Progress was made with overseas crew changes for American-flag ships as the SIU continued working with other unions, vessel operators, the Maritime Administration and the State Department to facilitate those reliefs. Operators also have chartered two private planes for reliefs in Diego Garcia.

The international maritime community hasn't always been as fortunate. The International Maritime Organization and International Transport Workers' Federation are leading the fight on behalf of foreign crews who in many cases have worked for months beyond their scheduled reliefs, mostly due to travel restrictions.

It also has been a busy legislative stretch for U.S. maritime. At press time, floor action was expected on the National Defense Authorization Act, which funds most key commercial maritime government programs. Additionally, Rep. Sean Patrick Maloney (D-New York) and Peter DeFazio (D-Oregon) last month introduced a new bill to provide financial relief for maritime stakeholders who've been impacted by the pandemic.

The House is scheduled to adjourn for recess on July 31, while the Senate will depart on Aug. 7. Both chambers are slated to return Sept. 8 before adjourning in early October for the run-up to the November 3 presidential election.

Union Leaders Urge Caution, Reiterate Support for Crews

Editor's note: The following message, dated July 10, 2020, is signed by the presidents of six maritime unions, including SIU President Michael Sacco. For a PDF copy, visit the SIU website. Also signing the letter were SIU Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, AMO President Paul Doell, MEBA President Marshall Ainley, MM&P President Don Marcus, SUP President Dave Connolly and MFOW President Anthony Poplawski.

It has become increasingly apparent the COVID-19 crisis is not going away anytime soon. Our members aboard ships in distant waters as well as aboard vessels of all types in inland waters remain in grave danger and the global supply chain is at risk.

Despite continuous appeals for meaningful assistance from both maritime labor and U.S.-flag vessel operators, the federal government has not mandated enforceable standards of shipboard health and safe operations. Further, our advocacy for a consistent, reliable, and rapid testing regimen for mariners remains without definitive support. As the supply chain and military security of the country are becoming increasingly at risk, we have demanded a more active role of government in support of mariners.

Each shipowner/operator has established its own diverging policies and protocol, and they vary greatly from employer to employer, even from ship to ship depending on shipboard culture. In the absence of uniform and government-enforced protocol during vessel in-port time with such critical evolutions as cargo operations, vendor/contractor access and shipyard repairs remain essentially unregulated and haphazard. This is an unacceptable situation that is beyond the control of ship's personnel.

However, as always, the burden on maintaining safety at sea remains in large part with the licensed and unlicensed personnel aboard ship. While every member of a crew recognizes his or her duty to their shipmates, employers and government must share ship safety responsibility through consistent policies and regulations. Health and safety aboard ship is a joint endeavor and should not be placed on the shoulders of mariners alone.

To do our part, we the undersigned urge our Members to take every precaution against the Coronavirus as recommended by company protocol and by such CDC guidelines that are applicable. Masks, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene, cleaning and sanitizing must all become routine and strictly maintained, whether aboard ship, in transit to or from a ship, in a hiring hall or at home in preparation for shipping out.

As your representatives, we are working together and using every advantage to both protect your health and safeguard your rights. With infection rates spiking again we must protect our lives and our livelihoods with renewed vigilance and discipline. Employers may intervene with reasonable or ineffective workplace policy; either way we will let them know that our contract rights remain in place. We understand the stress and anxiety of working in persistent and intensified danger and so we support common sense safety practices ashore and at sea. Your dedication, professionalism and perseverance is recognized, and your efforts are best honored by ensuring your own safety and that of others you encounter onboard ship, in your travels, at home or otherwise. Please continue to notify your Union if you have concerns regarding potential or actual COVID-19 exposure or the safety of your vessel.

President's Column

Opportunity for Justice

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



Michael Sacco

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SIU Directory

Michael Sacco, *President*

Augustin Tellez, *Executive Vice President*

David Heindel, *Secretary-Treasurer*

George Tricker, *Vice President Contracts*

Kate Hunt,

Vice President Government Services

Joe Vincenzo,

Asst. Vice President Government Services



Absentee Voting Has Deep Roots in United States History

While it might be making recent headlines, there's very little about absentee voting that is new.

According to the Constitutional Accountability Center, "One of the earliest known instances of absentee voting occurred during the American Revolution. In December 1775, a group of soldiers from the Continental Army sent a letter back to their town asking if their votes could be counted in a local election. And at the town meeting held to discuss the issue, the town agreed to count the votes, 'as if the men were present themselves.'"

During the War of 1812, Pennsylvania allowed soldiers to cast absentee ballots if they were stationed more than two miles from their home. After the end of the Civil War, the states gradually passed new laws to expand absentee voting to civilians. Between 1911 and 1924, 45 of the 48 states adopted some kind of absentee voting.

By World War II, every state let soldiers vote absentee, and the military was responsible for about 3.2 million absentee ballots cast, nearly seven percent of the total electorate in the 1944 presidential election.

For a more recent example, in the 2016 election, about 24 percent of all ballots were cast in the mail,

according to the federal Election Assistance Commission.

As of press time, 34 states (plus D.C.) offer "no-excuse" absentee ballots, and will mail residents an early ballot upon request: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, District of Columbia, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

Requests for an absentee ballot may be made online by visiting absentee.vote.org, and filling out a short request form.

Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington already send ballots to all eligible voters, so residents do not need to request one. All states permit residents who will be outside their home county to vote absentee, as well as voters with an illness or disability. Indiana, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas and West Virginia also offer the option to elderly voters.



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Congressional Reps Voice Strong Support for Merchant Marine

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Defense Scholar: Time to Refocus on U.S.-Flag Fleet

Loren Thompson, the chief operating officer for the Lexington Institute, recently wrote an op-ed for the Forbes website strongly stating that the current coronavirus pandemic should refocus the government’s attention to rebuilding the U.S.-flag fleet.

In an April 17 article titled “Coronavirus Makes the National Security Case for Rebuilding U.S. Maritime Power Compelling,” Thompson states as China continues to expand its maritime footprint around the world, especially in shipbuilding and global port operations, America is sailing away.

“The problem here isn’t that China is competing with U.S. maritime interests and winning,” he notes. “The problem is that

official Washington has largely deserted the field, failing to frame policies that can maintain a reasonable balance of maritime interests.”

After recalling how U.S. maritime capabilities were severely lacking at the start of both World War I and II, Thompson reflects how in the present time, “This could be disastrous for the United States. In a major conflict, the U.S. might lack the capacity to import essential goods from other countries, it might lack the shipping tonnage to sustain a protracted sealift effort, and it might lack the merchant seamen to operate what vessels it does possess.

“Without a reasonably robust American-flagged commercial fleet, there won’t be enough experienced seamen to sustain a military sealift operation in wartime,” he adds.

Thompson saluted the efforts to support and protect the Jones Act (the nation’s freight cabotage law) and the Maritime Security Program (which provides annual stipends for 60

militarily useful U.S.-flag vessels capable of being deployed in military or national emergency operations), but they are not enough: “Such policies are helpful but inadequate.”

He proposes Congress “bolster the American commercial oceangoing fleet and mariner community by raising the cargo preference requirement for all federally assisted loads to 100 percent.”

In addition, he believes there should be a comprehensive domestic shipbuilding program and an effort to “defray the differential operating costs of U.S. ships once they went to sea, since some nations impose virtually no requirements on the credentialing and work conditions of merchant mariners.”

Thompson wraps up his case by stating, “As policymakers rethink economic priorities in the aftermath of the coronavirus crisis, now would be a good time to recommit to being a first-class commercial seafaring nation.”

The Lexington Institute is a Virginia-based public policy think-tank that focuses on national security-related issues.

How to Become an SIU Member

Joining the SIU is easy and an important step in protecting your workplace rights. The union’s website – www.seafarers.org – includes printable PDF versions of forms that mariners may use to request and authorize payroll deductions for labor organization dues. The forms are posted at:

<https://www.seafarers.org/news/labor-maritime-news/civmar-news/>

Forms are also available under “SIU Forms” in the ABOUT tab.

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TWICs May Be Used to Obtain ‘TSA PreCheck’

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) on July 8 announced a potential benefit of carrying a Transportation Worker Identification Credential (TWIC).

The agency indicated that all active TWIC holders as well as Hazardous Materials Endorsement (HME) holders who are U.S. citizens, U.S. nationals or lawful permanent residents are immediately eligible for TSA “PreCheck,” which can considerably shorten waiting times in airport lines.

“This new benefit immediately allows nearly 3.5 million individuals to obtain TSA PreCheck at no additional cost beyond what they have already paid for their credentials,” said TSA Executive Assistant Administrator for Operations Support Stacey Fitzmaurice.

As noted in a news release from the agency, TWIC and HME holders “have already paid for, and successfully completed, a security threat assessment comparable to the TSA PreCheck security threat assessment.”

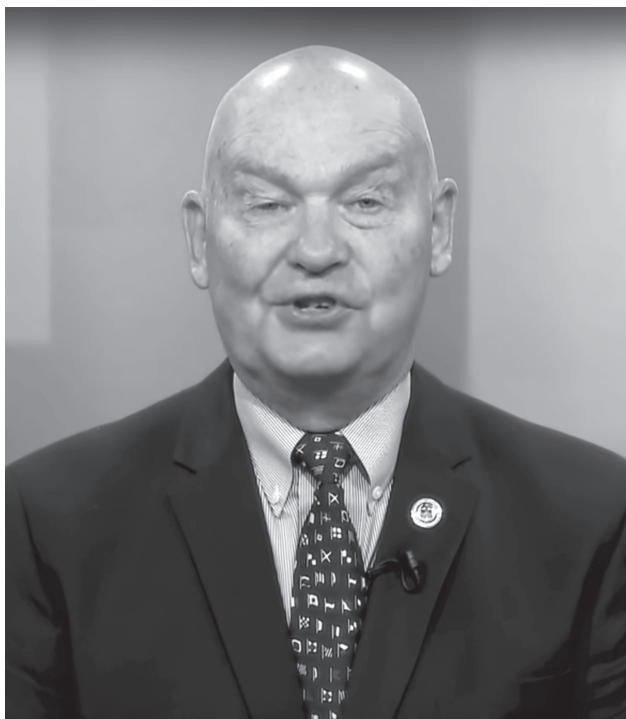
A TWIC is required by the Maritime Transportation Security Act for workers who need access to secure areas of the nation’s maritime facilities and vessels. The HME program is for individuals seeking to obtain, renew or trans-

fer an HME on a state-issued commercial driver’s license (CDL), allowing them to transport hazardous materials in commerce.

TWIC and HME holders can obtain TSA PreCheck expedited screening by entering the identification numbers printed on their TWIC card or state-issued CDL during the airline reservation process. Active TWIC holders enter their TWIC credential identification number (CIN) in the known traveler number (KTN) field of their airline reservation. The CIN is printed on the back of each TWIC in the lower left-hand corner.

According to the release, “TSA PreCheck is an expedited screening program offered by TSA that allows travelers to leave on their shoes, light outerwear and belt, keep their laptop in its case and their food and 3-1-1 compliant liquids/gels bag in a carry-on, in select TSA airport checkpoint screening lanes. More than 200 airports participate in TSA PreCheck nationwide and dozens of airlines participate in the popular program.”

More information is linked in a July 8 news post on the SIU website and on the TSA website (www.tsa.gov).



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

MARAD Delivers Rousing Maritime Day Video

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

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

This year’s theme was, “Resilient Sealift for a Resilient Nation.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Buzby then touched on the service of mariners during World War II, before saying, “Congress just approved recently the Congressional Gold Medal to award all those merchant marine veterans of World War II, who ... persevered in wartime to make sure the Allies had victory in Europe and in the Pacific. Today, you mariners are facing the same, very grave challenges, and we have to do the very same thing. We have to come up with countermeasures, things that are going to mitigate that risk and keep our ships sailing, and you’re doing that – whether it’s through personal protective

equipment, social distancing, contact tracking, the deep cleaning of our vessels, you’re making it happen and you’re still getting our ships through. And I think that’s a real tribute, as much to you and this generation as it was to those who preceded you and other generations who did what you had to do to get those ships through. I think it’s something that you all should be very, very proud of.

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

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

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

He continued, “As a result, the United States’ ability to project and sustain military power across transoceanic distances remains a strategic competitive advantage,

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

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

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

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

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

President Issues Maritime Day Proclamation

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

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

This year, as we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, we pay tribute to the United States merchant mariners who served as the “Fourth Arm of De-

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

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

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

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

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

DONALD J. TRUMP