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SIU CIVMARS Crew Up USS John L. Canley

USNS Apalachicola Launched, USNS Cody Delivered to MSC

New jobs for SIU CIVMARS are here and more are on the way following a recent flurry involving new tonnage.

Members of the SIU Government Services Division are sailing aboard the *USS John L. Canley*, the latest addition to the Lewis B. Puller class of expeditionary sea base ships. Built by union workers at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego, the 784-foot vessel is named for retired Marine Sgt. Maj. John L. Canley, who in 2018 received the Medal of Honor at the White House for his actions during the Vietnam War.

According to the U.S. Military Sealift Command (MSC), Canley "was originally awarded the Navy Cross but this was upgraded to the Medal of Honor, 50 years after the battle, making him the first living Black Marine to receive the nation's highest military decoration for valor."

Ships in this class originally were to carry USNS designations, but the Navy in 2020 announced it would commission them as USS vessels instead. They nevertheless include civilian mariners in their respective crews.

The seventh ship in the class – the *USS Robert E. Simanek* – is under construction at NASSCO.

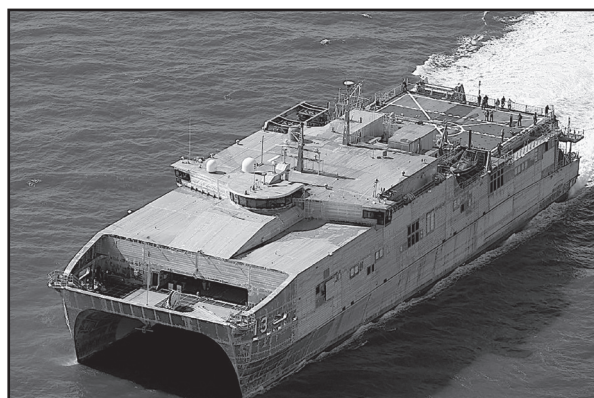
Meanwhile, MSC also announced the recent launch of its newest expeditionary fast transport (EPF) vessel, the *USNS Cody*, at Austal USA's shipyard in Mobile, Alabama. Capable of transporting 600 tons of personnel and cargo up to 1,200 nautical miles at an average speed of 35 knots, each vessel in this class includes a flight deck to support aircraft launch and recovery operations. The 339-foot-long ships are also capable of interfacing with roll-on/roll-off discharge facilities, and can load and off-load heavy vehicles such as a fully combat-loaded Abrams Main Battle Tank. Their crews include or will include CIVMARS from the SIU Government Services Division.

"Today's launch marks another successful milestone for the EPF 14, and it demonstrates the strength of the Navy-Austal USA partnership," said Navy Strategic and Theater Sealift Program Manager, Program Executive Office, Ships, Tim Roberts. "EPFs provide capability and capacity for a variety of missions, when and where our fleet needs support."

According to MSC, "EPFs operate in shallow waters. These versatile, non-combatant transport ships are used to quickly transport troops, military vehicles, and



SIU Asst. VP Joe Vincenzo (left) meets with CIVMARS aboard the *John Canley*.



The *USNS Apalachicola*, a new addition to the CIVMAR-crewed fleet, participates in sea trials. (Photo courtesy Austal USA)

equipment needed to support overseas contingency operations, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, special operations forces efforts, theater security cooperation activities, and emerging joint sea-basing concepts."



The CIVMAR-crewed *John Canley* is pictured at General Dynamics NASSCO in San Diego (a union shipyard). (Photo by Sarah Cannon, MSC Pacific)

Moreover, the Navy has accepted delivery of another expeditionary fast transport, the *USNS Apalachicola*. Like the others in the EPF class, its crew includes SIU CIVMARS.

U.S. House Hearing Examines Maritime Manpower Shortages

The SIU teamed up with several other unions and labor organizations to deliver a unified message during a recent hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives.

The Transportation and Infrastructure Committee's Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation on May 11 conducted a hearing titled, "Assessing the Shortage of United States Mariners and Recruitment and Retention in the United States Coast Guard." Guest panelists included U.S. Coast Guard Vice Adm. Paul Thomas, deputy commandant for Mission Support; Rear Adm. Ann Phillips, USN (Ret.), administrator, United States Maritime Administration; Heather MacLeod, director, Homeland Security and Justice, United States Government Accountability Office; and Dr. Beth Asch, Ph.D., senior economist, RAND Corporation.

Submitting joint testimony that was entered into the formal record were the SIU; American Maritime Officers; International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots; Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association; Marine Firemen's Union; Maritime Trades Department, AFL-CIO; Sailors' Union of the Pacific; and Transportation Trades Department, AFL-CIO.

The maritime labor organizations spelled out why the widely acknowledged man-

power crisis is worthy of prompt action.

"It is critically important that our government and the American people understand that without the U.S.-flag vessels and U.S. citizen licensed and unlicensed merchant mariners ready and available to provide the commercial sealift readiness capability needed by the Department of Defense, our nation would be forced to entrust the support, supply, and security of American forces deployed overseas to foreign flag vessels and foreign crews who may not support U.S. defense operations and objectives," they stated. "It goes without saying that doing so would jeopardize the lives of American servicewomen and men who will no longer be guaranteed the supplies and equipment they need to do their job in support of our country."

They added, "It is therefore imperative that the downward trend in the number of vessels operating under the U.S. flag must be stopped and reversed, and the American maritime manpower shortage must be addressed and resolved. Simply put, the current manpower shortage is a national security threat, and it is clear that the Department of

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President's Column

Focusing on Manpower

The SIU is far from alone in working to boost our nation's merchant mariner pool. This sentiment proved obvious during a recent hearing in the U.S. House of Representatives and throughout an industry panel that convened at U.S. Department of Transportation headquarters later in the month, on National Maritime Day.



David Heindel

The SIU weighed in at the hearing via joint testimony with other maritime labor organizations. The fact that people from so many segments of the industry, and from the military, Congress and the administration recognize the seriousness of this issue is essential to solving the problem.

It's an enormously important topic, which is why I've touched on it so often. And while there's a lot of work ahead, I'm optimistic that our union will continue being part of the solution. Check out our coverage of the hearing elsewhere in this edition for more information, and in the meantime, I'm happy to report that our ramped-up recruiting efforts are starting to pay off. We are working to maintain a robust manpower pool both in the Government Services Division and in what we call the A&G, better known to some as the commercial sector.

The best examples for being a merchant mariner come from you, our members. You can play a vital role in making sure well-trained, well-paid American mariners continue to sail the high seas. Spread the word and please encourage prospective Seafarers to visit the halls and CSUs, and to check out our online offerings. This is not only important for the nation's security, but it also assures qualified Seafarers are available when you need a relief.

No one denies that there's a lot of red tape in maritime (which is something we're working to improve), but the U.S. Merchant Marine remains a unique and rewarding career path, while the SIU offers solid contracts and top-notch representation. Put those components together and I think we've got a lot to offer. We will continue doing so as we spread the message online, in print and in person.

Hats Off to WWII Mariners

In addition to being saluted at various National Maritime Day ceremonies across the country, the U.S. Merchant Marine of World War II was recognized during Memorial Day gatherings in the nation's capital. Several mariners and their respective caretakers participated in a parade, helped place a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, and more.

For anyone unfamiliar with the heroism of World War II mariners – including thousands of SIU members – it is a history worth learning. Quite simply, and without any overstatement, the Allies would not have won the war without the incredible bravery, dedication and sacrifices of our mariners.

It's always gratifying when they are acknowledged, and their prominent inclusion on Memorial Day in D.C. is most appropriate.

SIU Directory

David Heindel, President

Augustin Tellez, Executive Vice President

Tom Orzechowski, Secretary-Treasurer

George Tricker, Vice President Contracts

Nicholas Celona,
Vice President Government Services

Joe Vincenzo,
Asst. Vice President Government Services

WWW.SEAFARERS.ORG



Settlement Results in Monetary Compensation for CIVMARS

A settlement secured late last year by the Seafarers International Union's Government Services Division (in conjunction with two other unions) has resulted in monetary compensation for eligible crews from five vessels.

As a result of the collective work by the SIU, the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), and the International Organization of Masters, Mates and Pilots (MM&P), eligible mariners are entitled to \$100 per day (per person) if they



The CIVMAR crewed USNS Charles Drew is pictured late last year with the amphibious assault ship USS Makin Island during a replenishment at sea. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Kendra Helmbrecht)

were restricted to ship after September 2020 without the unions receiving notification. The affected vessels are the USNS McLean, USNS Burlington, USNS Charles Drew, USNS Laramie and the USNS Yukon.

SIU Assistant Vice President Government Services Joe Vincenzo said, "CIVMARS may recall in a recent issue of the Federal Mariner, we published a story about a matter that was before an arbitrator with the Military Sealift Command. At issue was the question of whether management had to notify the SIU of pandemic-related restrictions to liberty, post-September 2020 settlement to the Gangways Up arbitration.

"The poignancy of the question can hardly be overstated since our ability to represent our mariners who were variously subject to restriction weighed in the balance of the answer," Vincenzo added. "Without notice, we were in the dark about whether or to what extent our mariners were being restricted, and if so, under what circumstances."

During discussions about a possible settlement, SIU Vice President Government Services Nicholas Celona emphasized the union's belief that any new settlement terms should be weighed as a collectively separate matter from the Gangways Up agreement.

Unions Testify at House Hearing on Manpower

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Defense cannot do its job if private industry is unable to provide the civilian American merchant mariners DOD needs. This requires strong, positive action by the Congress and the Administration to support and fund existing programs that support the operation of U.S.-flag vessels, including the Maritime Security Program, the Tanker Security Program, and the Jones Act; to eliminate statutory and regulatory impediments to the growth of the maritime manpower pool; and to propose and implement innovative and effective programs and policies that will increase the number of commercially viable U.S.-flag vessels, increase the number of American maritime jobs, and increase the amount of America's foreign trade carried aboard U.S.-flag ships. Simply put, more cargo means more U.S.-flag ships, and more U.S.-flag ships means more American mariners!"

To that end, they recommended several viable steps that would boost U.S.-flag shipping and help grow the manpower pool. Those suggestions included developing "a realistic maritime strategy that includes at its core a national cargo policy that increases the percentage of America's foreign trade carried aboard U.S.-flag commercial vessels and ensures that American mariners have jobs during peacetime. The treatment of U.S.-flag vessel operations and American mariners under the tax code should encourage rather than discourage the utilization of U.S.-flag vessels and American mariners, and bilateral and multilateral trade agreements should reflect the strategic importance to our nation of a stronger, more active U.S.-flag fleet in the carriage of America's exports and imports. Today, with the ongoing efforts by the Chinese Communist Party to secure domination over the world's oceans and international trade as well as the proliferation

of state-owned and controlled and foreign flag-of-convenience vessel operations, including partial ownership in many security-sensitive foreign ports, we have seen the U.S.-flag share of America's foreign trade fall to less than 2 percent. This situation threatens our security and threatens our economy, as China will only further increase its control over what cargoes move and at what cost unless we bolster our own U.S.-flag fleet and regain control over the carriage of our foreign trade."

The organizations further explained the importance of Congress "continuing to provide the Maritime Administration with the authority it needs to fully enforce and implement the nation's U.S.-flag cargo preference shipping requirements.... Similarly, we recommend Congress increase the U.S.-flag requirements for all other government-generated civilian cargoes to 100 percent, the same percentage that covers the shipment of defense cargoes, with U.S.-flag carriage dependent, as it is today, on the availability of U.S.-flag vessels at fair and reasonable rates. Requiring 100 percent would greatly decrease the gamesmanship of U.S. government agencies intentionally violating cargo preference statutes, and will make Maritime Administration enforcement that much easier."

After highlighting additional recommendations, the groups concluded, "Finally, we strongly support provisions included by the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee in H.R. 2741, the bipartisan Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2023. Reducing the time requirement for Able Seaman and authorizing additional funding for the Coast Guard to modernize its credentialing system are just two of the provisions that can and should help alleviate impediments to the efficient and timely availability of American mariners."

Video of the entire hearing is available on the subcommittee's website.

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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SIU Commemorates National Maritime Day Across U.S.

The SIU played a prominent role in this year's National Maritime Day ceremonies across the country. Those events took place May 22 in Norfolk, Virginia; Port Everglades, Florida; San Pedro, California; Port Arthur, Texas; and Washington, D.C.

The Norfolk ceremony happened aboard the hospital ship *USNS Comfort*, whose crew includes members of the SIU Government Services Division. Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer, commanding officer of the U.S. Military Sealift Command, addressed the shipboard crowd, as did Dave Yoho, a World War II mariner. SIU Representative Sam Spain attended the gathering. (The Norfolk chapter of the Propeller Club hosted a separate National Maritime Day event the prior week.)

As has become tradition, the Department of Transportation hosted a well-attended gathering at its headquarters in the nation's capital. Among the key messages delivered at the event: The United States has been well-served by its merchant marine for centuries, and must maintain a strong American-flag fleet with U.S. crews to preserve national and economic security.

The SIU had a strong presence at the ceremony, both in person and on screen. Six SIU members – Recertified Bosun **Robert Natividad**, Electrician **Michael McGlone**, QMED **Isaac Nugen**, Storekeeper **Christina Price**, QMED/Electrician **Ashely Burke** and Electrician **Yahya Mohamed** – were featured in an SIU-produced video shown during the ceremony. Attending the gathering were SIU Executive Vice President Augie Tellez, Secretary-Treasurer Tom Orzechowski, Assistant Vice President Pat Vandegrift, Safety Director Jose Argueta, Trainee Commandant Craig Guy, and members of Paul Hall Center (PHC) Apprentice Class 894.

Two of those class members – **Emily Castellano** and **Scott Haselbauer** – played high-profile roles in the ceremony. Castellano was the wreath-bearer, while Haselbauer handled the traditional ringing of eight bells.

Featured speakers (in order of appearance) were Acting Deputy Maritime Administrator Tamekia Flack (emcee), Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips, DOT Under Secretary for Transportation Policy Carlos Monje, U.S. Coast Guard Rear Adm. Wayne Arguin, Federal Maritime Commission (FMC) Chairman Daniel B. Maffei, and U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) Commanding Officer Gen. Jacqueline Van Ovost.

The theme of this year's DOT ceremony was "Mariners Move the Nation: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow." Approximately 250 people attended the gathering.

In Florida, SIU Assistant Vice President Kris Hopkins addressed personnel from Junior Achievement (a non-profit youth organization) regarding maritime careers and also helped give a tour of the port.

SIU Patrolman Kelly Krick spoke at the Port Arthur ceremony. He saluted past and present mariners and explained how America benefits from its maritime industry.

Retired Maritime Trades Department Executive Secretary-Treasurer Daniel Duncan served as the keynote speaker during the National Maritime Day luncheon in San Pedro. The meal followed the annual observance and memorial service conducted at the American Merchant Marine Veterans Memorial just outside the Port of Los Angeles.

Duncan reflected on the service of the thousands of civilian mariners who answered their nation's call – including those rejected by the military as 4Fs – during World War II. He noted the war started for U.S.-flag merchant shipping in the months before the nation was attacked by Japanese forces in December 1941.

He then drew attention to what merchant mariners had done since World War II, starting with the December 1950 exploits of the SIU-crewed *SS Meredith Victory* under the command of Capt. Leonard LaRue early in the Korean Conflict. Despite being under attack and receiving orders to set sail, the *Meredith Victory* remained in the Port of Hungnam and safely evacuated more than 14,000 refugees fleeing the North Korean and Chinese armies.

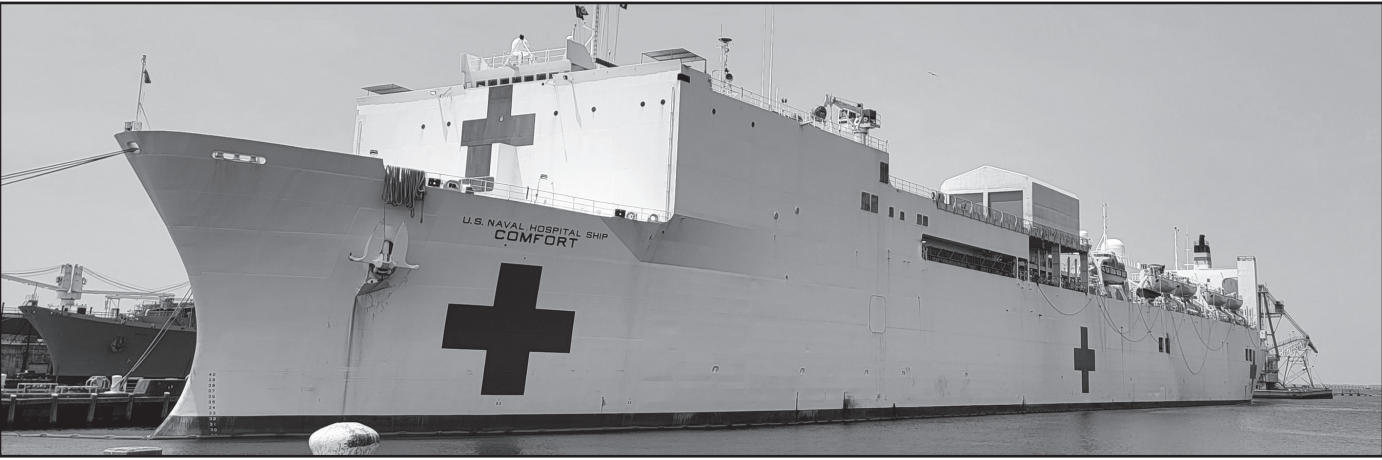
During the earlier outdoor ceremony, Los Angeles County Supervisor (and former U.S. Rep.) Janice Hahn noted that her late uncle was a merchant mariner during World War II and compared what he did not receive for his efforts to what his brother (and her father) did as a Navy sailor. She recalled it took more than 30 years before Congress bestowed veterans' status for that era's mariners. She said more needs to be done.



SIU Government Services Division Representative Sam Spain (right) greets World War II mariner Dave Yoho (second from right) and CIVMARS from the *USNS Comfort*.



MSC Commander Rear Adm. Michael Wettlaufer speaks during the ceremony aboard the Seafarers-crewed *USNS Comfort*. The ship is pictured directly below.



A Proclamation on National Maritime Day, 2023

Editor's note: The White House issued the following statement:

On National Maritime Day, we honor the thousands of dedicated merchant mariners who serve on United States vessels around the world. During times of both peace and war, merchant mariners are always there – stepping up to transport equipment, troops, and goods across the globe to make our country safer and stronger.

With professionalism and passion, merchant mariners have forged us into the maritime Nation we are today. During the Revolutionary War, merchant vessels joined the vastly outnumbered American fleet to help defend our independence. During World War II, as our brave service members battled the forces of fascism, more than a quarter-million members of the Merchant Marine volunteered to transport tanks, ammunition, and troops across the Atlantic and Pacific theaters. Many of them made the ultimate sacrifice in the service of freedom. And today, merchant mariners not only help move hundreds of billions of dollars' worth of cargo through our 25,000 miles of waterways and more than 360 commercial ports annually – they also crew vessels of our United States Ready Reserve, shipping vital military cargo to help the people of Ukraine defend themselves against Russia's brutal war.

My Administration remains steadfast in its support of the Merchant Marine as well as the Jones Act, which ensures American workers see the benefits of our domestic maritime industry. We are also making historic investments to improve our maritime supply chains by making it easier, faster, cheaper, cleaner, and safer for ships to get in and out of our ports. We are strengthening our support for licensed Merchant Marine Officers, including requesting \$196 million in my 2024 Budget to

upgrade the United States Merchant Marine Academy's campus, expand training, and help prevent sexual assault and support survivors – because every person at the Academy deserves to feel safe and have their contributions fully valued. We are also working to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion in the ranks of the Merchant Marine because our economy and national security are strongest when we draw on the full skillsets and diversity of our Nation.

The United States Merchant Marine underpins our Nation's prosperity and upholds our Nation's highest principles – freedom, liberty, and dignity. Today, and every day, we honor merchant mariners' service and sacrifice and renew our commitment to stand by their side, from sea to shining sea.

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. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR., President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2023, as National Maritime Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day and to celebrate the United States Merchant Marine and maritime industry with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

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

JOSEPH R. BIDEN JR.

At Sea and Ashore with the SIU



SIU Government Services Division Asst. VP Joe Vincenzo (eighth from right) and SIU Representative Jesse Ruth (right) are pictured with CIVMARS in San Diego.



During the awards dinner following this year's Seafarers Waterfront Classic (benefiting a non-profit organization that serves veterans and first responders), SIU VP Government Services Nicholas Celona (at podium) gave a well-received speech explaining the critical and historic role of the U.S. Merchant Marine supporting national, economic and homeland security. He punctuated the remarks with the unfurling of a patriotic banner (below) featuring the Latin motto "Acta Non Verba" (deeds, not words), which historically is associated with the U.S. Merchant Marine.



The ACOE crew of the *McFarland* is pictured in Norfolk, Virginia.



SIU Representative Sam Spain (left) and SIU Counsel Jon Madden (second from left) confer with representatives from the Military Sealift Command and from other maritime unions for discussions on how to help improve the quality of life for CIVMARS aboard ship and on the beach. The meeting took place near Baltimore.



SIU Government Services Division Assistant Vice President Joe Vincenzo (right) discusses union issues with CIVMARS in Norfolk, Virginia.



From left, SIU Asst. VP Joe Vincenzo and SIU Government Services Representative Jesse Ruth meet with SIU CIVMARS Sharon Hill and Torey Lee aboard the *John Lewis*.