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# AMO National Executive Board elects Willie Barrere to serve as union’s national president

The National Executive Board of American Maritime Officers has elected Willie Barrere to serve as the union’s national president in accordance with Article VIII, Section 1 (I) of the AMO National Constitution. He will complete the term of former National President Paul Doell, who retired from AMO.

Barrere was elected AMO national executive vice president in 2022.

Barrere had accepted appointment and agreed to serve in that office in 2021 to complete the term of the late Mike Finnigan, who had been elected AMO national executive vice president in 2018.

Barrere sailed with AMO as Captain for 27 years prior to coming ashore to work for the union as the West Coast representative in 2016.

Additionally, the AMO National Executive Board elected National Vice President, Inland Waters, Danny Robichaux to complete Barrere’s term as national executive vice president.

Robichaux was elected to office in 2018 and was re-elected in 2022. He has served an active role in AMO Deep-Sea, Great Lakes, and Inland Waters contract

negotiations since he became a part of the contract team in 2019, working with the late Mike Finnigan.

Robichaux came ashore to work for AMO in 2014 as a national assistant vice president after sailing with an AMO contracted company for 34 years on inland and offshore tugs, including voyages throughout the East, West and Gulf Coast regions.

# Paul Doell retires as AMO national president

Paul Doell, former national president of American Maritime Officers, has retired for medical reasons after having worked for the union for more than 50 years.

Doell’s career with AMO began in 1972 at the union’s headquarters in Brooklyn, and he spent much of his early time on staff in the AMO Great Lakes homeport of Toledo, Ohio, working in various capacities.

Doell became the editor of communi-

cations, working with three AMO presidents over the course of more than two decades in this role, overseeing print and online publications and preparing all correspondence to AMO members in the Deep-Sea, Great Lakes, and Inland Waters sectors, and to other industry interests and organizations.

He maintained a managing role in the AMO administration’s communications after becoming the union’s legislative director

in Washington DC, a position he held for several years. On Capitol Hill, he worked with key figures in both political parties and in both chambers of Congress to promote the privately-owned and operated U.S.-flag merchant fleet and to sustain jobs for U.S. merchant mariners in domestic and international trades.

Doell was elected national president of AMO in December 2014, and was re-elect-

ed to the office in 2018 and 2022.

He has a lifelong link to the union. His father, Ray Doell, was a founding member of the Brotherhood of Marine Engineers, the union that evolved into AMO. Ray Doell served as the BME’s New York port agent, as a contract negotiator, as director of membership benefits and as the BME’s first elected secretary-treasurer before returning to sea on his chief engineer’s license.



AMO officials (third row, left to right) National Assistant Vice President Joe Brown; National Vice President, Great Lakes, John Clemons; National Vice President, Deep Sea, Jeff Richards; National President Willie Barrere; National Secretary-Treasurer Bob Rice; and Government Liaison Bob Silva gather for a photo in Dania Beach at the union’s headquarters with AMO staff members, including Brendan Keller, Maria Moffitt, Chris Holmes, Roy Emrick, Luimy Cabreja, Carly Philipps, Yakir Dotan, Judy Sallaberry, Angela Hijuelo, Chris Rodriguez, Emerita Rodriguez and David Kepke.



# Full ahead for AMO throughout transition in leadership

**By Willie Barrere**  
**National President**

American Maritime Officers has navigated a change in leadership following the retirement of Paul Doell, our union's former president.

While elements of our transition will continue for a short time, know that those who have stepped up to serve our union are not starting from scratch. These circumstances have ushered in a leadership team with experience and devotion to serving the membership.

We are prepared for the course ahead of us and we are working together to continue delivering on our main objectives. These include ongoing increases in wages and benefits, shorter rotations, improvements in connectivity and shipboard conditions, expansion of the AMO-contracted fleet, pioneering new opportunities for AMO members, and driving recruitment to remedy the effects of the nationwide labor shortage within our ranks.

If you don't know me, or don't know me well, I am the son of a U.S. Army colonel and attended high school in the Panama Canal Zone. I used to watch the ships transiting the canal and, after talking with a number of people in the industry, decided going to sea would be a pretty cool job.

I learned about the state maritime academies and the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy and I applied. I was accepted by

Kings Point and went there with the thought of being a ship captain.

Upon graduation, I worked at the academy and then sailed as an AB with Military Sealift Command prior to getting my first job with AMO. I earned my Unlimited Master's License at age 27 and started sailing as captain at age 29. In all, I spent 32 years at sea with AMO — 27 of those as captain, primarily aboard Crowley and Maersk ships.

I came ashore when my father's health started deteriorating. I lived in California at the time and was asked to work as AMO's West Coast representative. I enjoyed that position, helping the membership and working with Danny Shea and later with Mike Finnigan on numerous projects.

When Mike tragically passed away in 2021, I was asked to step up and complete his term as the union's executive vice president. I did so and completed a move to Florida. I was then elected executive vice president in December 2022.

When Paul retired after more than 50 years at AMO, the National Executive Board elected me to serve as AMO president until the next election of union officials.

In every position I've held throughout my career, I've strived to be the best for my crew or my team. This job is no exception and I will always be looking for what we can do better.

As for what we are doing now, the labor shortage is a central factor. It impacts our membership and contracted operating

companies, and it has influenced the priorities of our union.

The labor shortage has led to increased competition between unions and other maritime enterprises seeking to attract officers. This has driven up wages to recruit and retain a new generation of mariners, and the pay scales for AMO members are increasing accordingly.

To elevate AMO as the most attractive option for new officers, we established a membership drive with reduced initiation and a fast track to membership, which proved very successful. We're more than a month into our second membership drive now and hope for a similar outcome. We also focus on quality-of-life issues in our contract negotiations, with onboard Internet access throughout our fleet being a top priority.

We completely revamped our recruiting strategy and set it in motion last summer. About 500 applicants paid off their initiation this past year through our membership drive and more officers applied to AMO. Although we are focusing on academies as the most efficient venue for recruiting new officers in numbers, we continue to explore other potential sources for new applicants with an eye on time, cost, and outcomes.

STAR Center has significantly increased the number of cadets in the TECH Program. Additionally, STAR Center launched the Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch (OICEW) program last

summer for officers with a national license to earn their STCW qualifications — a program long in the making. The first class has graduated and the second OICEW class is now in session.

We've endorsed direct-hire letters for our contracted operating companies to encourage an expansion of corporate recruiting. We have also established pass-through agreements with the other officers' unions to fill billets in all departments on a case-by-case basis.

STAR Center continues to offer the Military Sealift Command Core4 course to efficiently provide the training needed by AMO members, applicants, and potential applicants to meet the basic requirements to sail aboard MSC vessels.

Our tankship Person in Charge program is in full swing for PIC endorsements as our contracted tanker fleet continues to expand. We also have some new agreements taking shape in the wind farm arena and we expect they will provide exciting opportunities for AMO members.

In our shoreside operations, the executive board is working together with our staff to build better relationships and a stronger team to provide superior service to the membership.

With a sudden change in leadership, it sometimes feels like we are just getting started. But the truth is, we are already well underway. I'm looking forward to working with you in my new role as president of AMO.

## Second course for OICEW program in session at STAR Center



Participating in the second installment of the Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch (OICEW) program established by American Maritime Officers and STAR Center are Steven Benavides Jr., Nasser Ahmed, Scott Collins, Steven Miller, Abdullah Alamri and Lawrence Bush Jr. AMO and STAR Center worked with the National Maritime Center for years to develop the OICEW program, which greatly reduces the number of weeks required for mariners with a national license to obtain the required STCW endorsement on their Merchant Mariner Credential to be able to sail deep sea.



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# New AMO membership drive underway with reduced initiation fee through June 30, 2024

The American Maritime Officers Membership Drive Program has been re-established in 2024 to attract new applicants for membership in AMO. The latest membership drive is now underway and will last through June 30, 2024.

The AMO initiation fee was raised on January 1, 2024 to \$6,000 pursuant to a vote by the National Executive Board, which was ratified by the membership.

**However, under the terms of the Membership Drive Program for 2024, a reduced initiation fee in the amount of \$3,000 has been established.**

To qualify for the reduced initiation fee, applicants must meet the following conditions:

**1. The applicant will pay the reduced initiation fee of \$3,000 in full not later than June 30, 2024.**

**2. The applicant will provide Letters of Recommendation from at least two members of American Maritime Officers.**

**3. The applicant will be in Good Standing, with their dues paid through the current quarter.**

AMO applicants who do not pay the reduced initiation fee in full, establish good standing with the union, and submit the two letters of recommendation prior to June 30, 2024 will be responsible for the standard initiation fee for deep-sea and Great Lakes officers at the time they applied: \$6,000.

For more information, please contact AMO National Secretary-Treasurer Bob Rice at **(954) 295-6160** or via e-mail: **brice@amo-union.org**.

# New jobs for AMO as *ARC Honor* is reflagged for service in the Maritime Security Program fleet

American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier Group Inc. has added the *M/V ARC Honor* to its fleet. The *ARC Honor* is the company's ninth American-flagged roll-on/roll-off (RO/RO) vessel and fourth large car/truck carrier (LCTC).

"This tremendously capable and flexible U.S.-flag ship is crewed by American merchant mariners and now operates in ARC's global network supporting America's national defense and economic security through trade," said ARC President and CEO Eric Ebeling.

The former *M/V Tulane* was reflagged to American registry and renamed

the *M/V ARC Honor* on February 2, 2024. She was renamed *ARC Honor* consistent with past practice to name ARC ships after American values. The reflagging was conducted with the U.S. Coast Guard in the port of Incheon, Korea. The *M/V ARC Honor* is enrolled in the Maritime Security Program (MSP) and the Voluntary Intermodal Sealift Agreement (VISA).

"Congratulations to American Roll-On Roll-Off Carrier on bringing a new vessel into the U.S.-flag fleet!" said Maritime Administrator Ann Phillips. "As a new addition to the Maritime Security Program, this ship and her crew of U.S. credentialed mariners

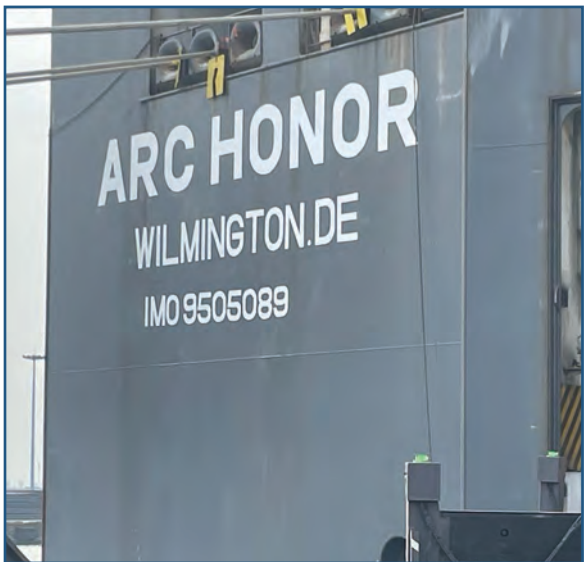
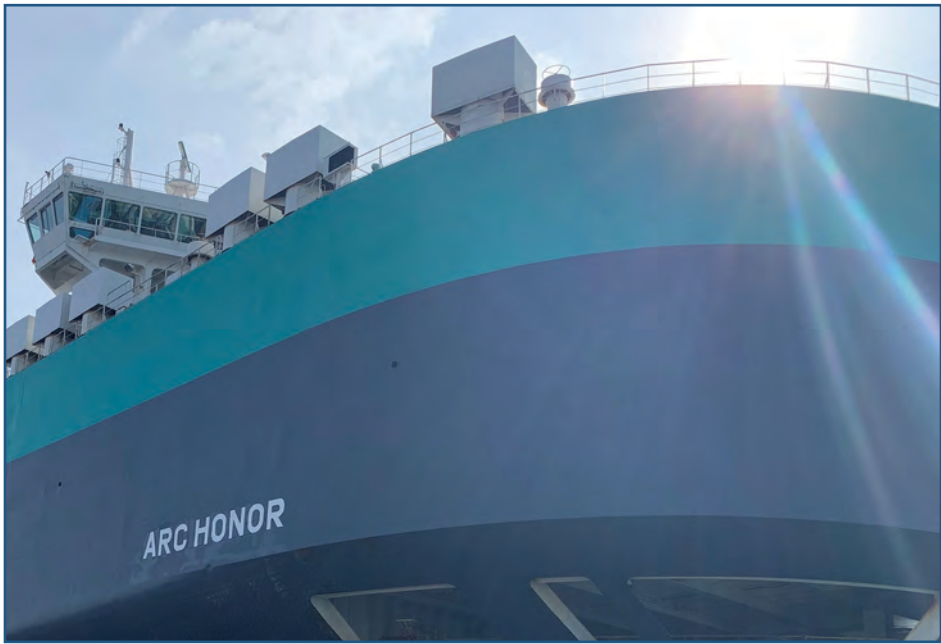
will support our nation's economic security and provide sealift capacity for our Armed Forces operating around the world."

The *ARC Honor* will be among the most capable and militarily-useful vessels in the U.S.-flag commercial fleet, able to carry tracked and wheeled vehicles, helicopters, and other high and heavy project cargoes. The vessel is 229.99 meters long with a 6.50-meter-high main deck and a stern ramp rated for cargo weighing up to 320 metric tons.

"The Maritime Security Program and the participating U.S. mariners and ships are crucial elements of our U.S.

sealift strategy, our national defense, and commerce," said American Maritime Officers National President Willie Barrere. "AMO proudly joins our industry partners in welcoming the *ARC Honor* to our U.S.-flag fleet."

"The leadership team at ARC once again is demonstrating its commitment to our industry, to our mariners, and to our nation by bringing this vessel under the Stars and Stripes," said Seafarers International Union President David Heindel. "The SIU has been with ARC from the beginning, and we're excited about providing the crew for the *ARC Honor*."



Members of American Maritime Officers working aboard the *ARC Honor* in February included Captain Zachary Krissoff, Chief Mate Dean Lynch, Second Mate Gage Reamy, Third Mate John Gall, Chief Engineer James Delgado, First Assistant Engineer Chadwick McDuffie, Second A.E. Ryan Ferschke and Third A.E. Eric Fresch. The ship was reflagged February 2 and is operated for ARC in the Maritime Security Program fleet by TOTE Services.

## MONTHLY MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Regular monthly membership meetings for American Maritime Officers will be held on the first Wednesday of every month except in the months of January, June, July and September, when the membership meeting will be held on the second Wednesday. Meetings will be held at AMO National Headquarters and will begin at 1 p.m. local time. The next meetings are scheduled to take place on the following dates:

**March 6, April 3**

# Attention dynamic positioning operators certified by the Nautical Institute: Changes to DPO renewal/revalidation requirements in effect beginning January 1, 2024

**Changes to revalidation requirements – continuing professional development**  
From January 2024, the requirements to revalidate Dynamic Positioning Certificates will be changing.

To make sure that DP operators keep pace with the developing standards in a fast-changing industry, DPOs renewing their certificates will now be asked to demonstrate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as well as experience.

**To revalidate your Unclassed/Limited/Unlimited DP Certificate, you will need to:**

- Complete the Nautical Institute Dynamic Positioning Refresher Course  
*Note: STAR Center will offer a five-day approved DP Revalidation/Refresher and Competency Assessment Course, which will meet the NI CPD requirement. This will include completing the NI revalidation examination. STAR Center will begin offering the DP Revalidation/Refresher and Competency Assessment Course starting in 2024. Please see STAR Center’s schedule online ([www.star-center.com/schedule.html](http://www.star-center.com/schedule.html)).*

OR

- Be enrolled in an NI-approved Continuing Professional Development program. Note: There are currently two online approved CPD program options:
  - IMCA/NI (<https://tinyurl.com/yc2mryue>)
  - Keelson Marine (<https://www.keelsonmarineassurance.com/dpcpd>)

*There is an annual subscription fee of approximately \$150/year. The individual would enroll each year and be responsible for all fees including the exam. In addition to the yearly CPD program Individuals are also required to take the NI Revalidation Exam which will be arranged directly with NI online.*

To make sure all applicants have enough time to meet the requirements, the NI will be introducing the changes gradually over the next five years as follows.

If you have 150 days of DP sea time/DP activities and are due to revalidate your certificate in the following years, please see requirements below:

- 2024** – NI DP Refresher course, **OR** NI Revalidation online exam **AND one year** of an NI-approved CPD program
- 2025** – NI DP Refresher course, **OR** NI Revalidation online exam **AND two years** of an NI-approved CPD program
- 2026** – NI DP Refresher course, **OR** NI Revalidation online exam **AND three years** of an NI-approved CPD program
- 2027** – NI DP Refresher course, **OR** NI Revalidation online exam **AND four years** of an NI-approved CPD program
- 2028** – NI DP Refresher course, **OR** NI Revalidation online exam **AND five years** of an NI-approved CPD program

If your certificate is due to expire in one of the years above, and you do not have all the requirements in place to revalidate your certificate before the expiry date, you will be granted an automatic 12-month extension to your existing certificate to complete the CPD requirements.

- If you have between 30-150 days sea time: You must complete the NI Dynamic Positioning Refresher Course
- If you have less than 30 days sea time: You must complete the NI Dynamic Positioning Revalidation Course

IMPLEMENTATION OF CPD SCHEME
Table 1: Revalidation Matrix
1 Jan 2024:
A DPO/DPVM with 150 days DP sea time who is applying for revalidation will have to sit the NI Revalidation Course on line exam and complete a minimum of one year of the NI-approved CPD program or complete the NI DP Refresher Course. Those who do not meet all the new requirements will be given 12 months to do so, after which they can reapply for revalidation.
1 Jan 2025:
A DPO/DPVM with 150 days DP sea time who is applying for revalidation will have to sit the NI Revalidation Course online exam and complete a minimum of two years of the NI-approved CPD program or complete the NI DP Refresher Course. Those who do not meet all the new requirements will be given 12 months to do so, after which they can reapply for revalidation.
1 Jan 2026:
A DPO/DPVM with 150 days DP sea time who is applying for revalidation will have to sit the NI Revalidation Course online exam and complete a minimum of three years of the NI-approved CPD program or complete the NI DP Refresher Course. Those who do not meet all the new requirements will be given 12 months to do so, after which they can reapply for revalidation.
1 Jan 2027:
A DPO/DPVM with 150 days DP sea time who is applying for revalidation will have to sit the NI Revalidation Course online exam and complete a minimum of four years of the NI-approved CPD program or complete the NI DP Refresher Course. Those who do not meet all the new requirements will be given 12 months to do so, after which they can reapply for revalidation.
1 Jan 2028:
A DPO/DPVM with 150 days DP sea time who is applying for revalidation will have to sit the NI Revalidation Course on line exam and complete a minimum of five years of the NI-approved CPD program or complete the NI DP Refresher Course. Those who do not meet all the new requirements will be given 12 months to do so, after which they can reapply for revalidation.

All information may be found on the NI Alexis (<https://tinyurl.com/3rh2tk6h>).  
The above information is also available on the STAR Center website ([www.star-center.com/info/dp\\_reval\\_refresh.html](http://www.star-center.com/info/dp_reval_refresh.html)).

## U.S. Coast Guard: Acceptance of STCW assessments performed by assessors who are not USCG-approved Qualified Assessors

*The following was released by the National Maritime Center.*  
The Office of Merchant Mariner Credentialing has published Change 4 to Navigation and Vessel Inspection Circular (NVIC) 19-14, *Policy on Qualified Assessors*. Notable among the changes is an extension of the period during which mariners may use assessments of competence completed by a qualified mariner who is not a Coast Guard-approved Qualified Assessor (QA).

Assessments of competence for STCW endorsements must be signed by a Coast Guard-approved QA in accordance with 46 CFR 11.301(a)(1)(i) and 12.601(b)(1)(i). QAs must be approved by the Coast Guard either individually or as part of a Coast Guard-approved or accepted course or training program, as described in NVIC 19-14.

Current policy allows for the acceptance of STCW assessments, performed for and signed by an assessor not approved by the Coast Guard, until December 31, 2023. Such an

assessor must meet the professional requirements in 46 CFR 10.405(a)(3) to determine competence for the specific endorsement.

The Coast Guard is aware of the limited number of approved QAs, resulting in hardship for mariners trying to complete STCW assessments after December 31, 2023. In consideration of this, **the Coast Guard will continue to allow STCW assessments to be signed by an assessor who meets the requirements specified in NVIC 19-14 until December 31, 2028.** These assessments must be submitted to the Coast Guard as part of a complete application no later than June 30, 2029. Qualified military personnel need not be approved QAs and may continue to sign assessments after December 31, 2028.

The revised NVIC is available online: [www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/NVIC](http://www.dco.uscg.mil/Our-Organization/NVIC).  
Mariners and other interested parties should contact the Coast Guard by email at [MMCPolicy@uscg.mil](mailto:MMCPolicy@uscg.mil) or by phone at (202) 372-2357 with any questions or feedback.



# U.S.-flag Great Lakes cargo float increased 6.5 percent in 2023

U.S.-flagged Great Lakes freighters moved 81.4 million tons of cargo in 2023, an increase of 6.5 percent compared with 2022. The total U.S.-flag cargo float for 2023 was 1.2 percent above the fleet's

five-year average mark, the Lake Carriers' Association reported.

Iron ore cargoes totaled 42.4 million tons, an increase of 13.4 percent compared with the previous year.

Coal cargoes were down 9.7 percent to 8.4 million tons for the year.

Limestone shipments increased by 3.9 percent to 24.6 million tons.

Cement shipments were nearly equal

to 2022 at 3.7 million tons.

Salt and grain cargoes were down by 5.8 percent and 11.8 percent, respectively.

Sand shipments increased by 12.4 percent in 2023.

U.S.-Flag Dry-Bulk Cargo Carriage on the Great Lakes: 2018-2023 and Long-Term Average (net tons)

Commodity	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	Average 2018-2022
Iron Ore							
Direct Shipments	41,711,804	46,004,805	33,422,404	37,960,232	35,370,648	39,008,635	38,893,979
Transshipments	4,092,629	3,678,669	3,637,614	3,690,957	2,017,176	3,375,654	3,423,409
Total - Iron Ore	45,804,433	49,683,474	37,060,018	41,651,189	37,387,824	42,384,289	42,317,388
Coal							
Lake Superior	8,697,702	7,952,133	4,930,728	7,268,985	6,160,250	5,367,531	7,001,960
Lake Michigan	390,438	723,841	560,057	827,962	878,467	803,237	676,153
Lake Erie	2,728,192	2,642,972	1,764,650	2,255,738	2,262,121	2,230,065	2,330,735
Total - Coal	11,816,332	11,318,946	7,255,435	10,352,685	9,300,838	8,400,833	10,008,847
Limestone	21,961,050	24,086,722	20,694,823	24,141,410	23,704,683	24,631,568	22,917,738
Cement	2,933,346	3,288,509	3,441,467	3,612,012	3,748,705	3,732,534	3,404,808
Salt	460,577	923,476	866,354	1,162,396	1,230,538	1,158,665	928,668
Sand	493,128	413,040	411,165	500,055	653,695	734,591	494,217
Grain	259,745	289,728	314,849	366,154	356,503	314,513	317,396
Totals	83,728,611	90,003,895	70,044,110	81,785,901	76,382,786	81,356,993	80,389,061

Source: Lake Carriers' Association

## AMO aboard steamer *Arthur M. Anderson* on the Great Lakes



Above left: Members of American Maritime Officers working aboard the steamer *Arthur M. Anderson* in December, here in Toledo, Ohio, included Captain Tyler Thompson and Third Mate Janet Johnson.

Above right: AMO members working aboard the *Arthur M. Anderson* in December, here in Toledo, Ohio, included First Assistant Engineer Shawn Mulley and Chief Engineer Jason Furtah.

At left: AMO members working aboard the *Arthur M. Anderson* in December, here in Toledo, Ohio, included Steward David Joaquin. AMO represents the licensed officers and stewards working aboard the Key Lakes vessel.



# Military Sealift Command Navy Reserve Force symposium includes tour of *USNS Montford Point*



Photos: Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command

U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Gen. Brian Cavanaugh, commanding general, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic, Marine Forces Command, Marine Forces Northern Command; U.S. Navy Capt. James Murdock, commander, Military Sealift Command Atlantic; the Honorable Charles F. Bolden Jr., 12th administrator of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA); and Mrs. Alexis Bolden, the ship's sponsor — here with members of American Maritime Officers First Assistant Engineer Mike Long, Chief Engineer Rob Mussler, Captain Joshua Jordan and Third Mate Steven Corachan — toured the *USNS Montford Point* (T-ESD-1) at Norfolk Naval Station on November 9, 2023. Charles Bolden and Alexis Bolden visited and spoke about the history of Montford Point Marines with the leadership and the crew of the *USNS Montford Point*. The ship was christened on November 13, 2012.

The following is excerpted from an article written by Hendrick Dickson, Military Sealift Command.

Military Sealift Command hosted a four-day symposium for its Navy Reserve Force in November at Naval Station Norfolk so that Navy Reserve enlisted Sailors could gain a better understanding of the command's mission.

More than 100 Reservists attended the symposium, which included 40 hours of reserve unit training, MSC 101 – Ship Program Manager classes, Job Qualification Requirements and general military training. MSC Deputy Commander Rear Adm. Jeffery Spivey and Force Master Chief Steven Bosco also addressed the Sailors.

The symposium allowed reservists to connect with MSC's active duty Sailors during joint command quarters, led by MSC Chief of Staff Capt. Daniel Broadhurst. They also held joint training sessions.

"We began to plan the symposium earlier in the year with the intent to bring Sailors here to train together," said MSC Far East Command Senior Chief William O'Connell. "The training was invaluable to gain a better understanding of MSC, while providing an opportunity for MSC Sailors to learn from other units and fellow enlisted Sailors from across the country."

Military Sealift Command Headquarters Command Senior Chief Lynita King said many of those in attendance were newly assigned to MSC and were not as familiar with the command's mission. The symposium gave those reservists a firsthand look at how MSC operates.



The Captain of *USNS Montford Point* (T-ESD-1), Joshua Jordan, speaks with the 12th Administrator of National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), the Honorable Charles F. Bolden Jr., and his spouse, Alexis Bolden, the ship's sponsor, during a tour of the *USNS Montford Point* at Norfolk Naval Station on November 9.



*USNS Montford Point* First Assistant Engineer Mike Long talks about the capabilities of the expeditionary transfer dock vessel with Military Sealift Command Reserve enlisted Sailors in the engineering control room during a ship tour.

"We've never had an enlisted symposium where we brought reservists to MSC to get together and see what we do and how we function," she said. "We had some who have only been with MSC for less than a year and had no idea of the magnitude of the role MSC plays in the overall defense of our nation."

MSC has more than 900 reserve members who augment the headquarters staff and area commands. They support units, including Expeditionary Port Units that provide port opening and management capabilities and Cargo Afloat Rig Team units that augment Combat Logistics Force during operational surges.

MSC Force Master Chief Steven Bosco said this symposium helped to build bridges between the Reserve force and the more than 6,500 Civil Service Mariners (CIVMARs), civilian support staff and active duty service members at MSC.

"Now more than ever it is important for the MSC team to work together," said Bosco. "We are a very diverse team consisting of CIVMARs, civilian personnel and military. Our reserve component is at least two times larger than our active duty competent. With that in mind, a large percentage of our reservists are enlisted and often don't get to hear or have input on their responsibilities when called to fight. This symposium was all about aligning the team to the mission and how vital a role our reserve component plays."

**Montford Point** — Continued on Page 7



# Rep. Gallagher addresses concerns about U.S. sealift capacity with military and government leaders

*The following is excerpted from a letter dated February 6, signed by Congressman Mike Gallagher (R-Wis.), chairman of the Select Committee on the Chinese Communist Party, and sent to the leaders of the U.S. Transportation Command, U.S. Maritime Administration and Military Sealift Command. The letter concludes with a series of questions for the military and agency leaders regarding the status and specifics of U.S. sealift capacity and capabilities, plans for increasing capacity and the U.S. mariner workforce, and plans and assessments for contingencies. Responses were requested no later than February 28.*

In responding to a conflict in the Indo-Pacific, U.S. forces will depend on a fleet of sealift vessels to move equipment across the region. Almost 90 percent of all Army and Marine Corps equipment supporting large-scale overseas operations will be transported by ship. However, while China has undertaken a historic buildup of both military and commercial ships, the United States' sealift fleet has continued to age and go underfunded, appearing woefully inadequate for the daunting task of providing logistical support to troops thousands of miles away from the homeland. As described by an unnamed senior official responsible for American sealift capability, the situation is a "screaming national security vulnerability."

Sealift has long been an essential element of our national security strategy. In October 1989, during the final months of the Cold War, the White House issued the National Security Directive on Sealift. The directive called sealift critical to "executing this country's forward defense strategy" and explained the "national sealift objective" was to "ensure that sufficient military and civil maritime resources [would] be available to meet defense deployment, and essential economic requirements in support of our national security strategy." Now, in the middle of a new Cold War, the United States finds itself with neither the sufficient military nor civil resources to meet our sealift objective.

The Pentagon's sealift plan for con-

flict currently relies on the mobilization of 45 ships of the Ready Reserve Force (maintained by the Maritime Administration) and 15 ships of the Military Sealift Command (a component of Transportation Command) to transport equipment and sustain our forces. In other words, the core military sealift capability of the United States consists of a mere five dozen ships. While the Secretary of Defense would be able to call upon additional commercial merchant vessels participating in the Maritime Security Program to meet any remaining sustainment requirements, the number of ships participating in the program today stands at just 60. This latter number is an extension of the diminutive size of our overall commercial merchant fleet. As of May 2023, out of a global fleet of over 40,000 merchant ships, the U.S. merchant fleet consisted of a meager 177 vessels, down from more than 600 in 1990. By contrast, China boasts more than 5,500 merchant ships, approximately 30 times what we possess.

A 2019 readiness exercise revealed an uncomfortable reality that the small and aging U.S. sealift fleet, crewed by a shrinking workforce of mariners, may not be ready to respond to a crisis in the Indo-Pacific. Unsurprisingly, you, the Commander of Transportation Command, General Jacqueline Van Ovost, stated, "My highest concerns lie in reductions in capacity and readiness in both sealift and air refueling." The Navy also recently explained, in its Fiscal Year 2024 Budget Estimates, "Current theater logistics posture and capability to sustain the force are inadequate to support operations specifically in a contested environment." Thus, even if the United States has the weapons and equipment to fight, it faces the alarming risk that it may lack the sealift capabilities to sustain the fight. The potential impact of such a logistical deficiency on our deterrence posture at this perilous moment cannot be understated.

## Size and Age of Sealift Fleet

The United States' fleet of military sealift ships — comprised of vessels from the Ready Reserve Force and the Military

Sealift Command — currently has 60 ships. This is simply inadequate to sustain forces in a conflict in the Indo-Pacific. Then-Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Mike Gilday stated that the sealift fleet was too small and that the size was "grounded on analysis that was done decades ago."

While civilian merchant ships may be called upon to augment our sealift capacity, the current size of the U.S. commercial fleet, of only about 180 ships, will limit the extent to which it can meaningfully provide additional logistical support. And with our current shipbuilding capacity, which is 200 times less than China's, we will not be able to build our way out of the problem, absent a historic and generational investment.

While the United States could try to hire foreign merchant ships to transport U.S. military equipment, we face the risk that they may not be willing to do so in wartime. And although the Navy has put forward plans to acquire foreign commercial vessels to be incorporated into the military sealift fleet, there is little indication that such efforts are being pursued at the scale and pace that the moment requires.

The problem posed by the inadequate size of the sealift fleet is compounded by its age. The average age of the 45 ships of the Ready Reserve Force — which make up the bulk of the military sealift fleet — is 45 years old. Seventeen of the ships are 50 years or older. Sealift vessels under the Military Sealift Command face similar issues. You, General Van Ovost, aptly stated, "We are a generation late in recapitalizing our ready sealift fleet to meet our national objectives."

## Mariners

The troubling state of our sealift capability starts with the fleet but does not end there. The former head of the Maritime Administration, Mark H. Buzby, stated that the lack of experienced merchant mariners to crew sealift vessels was a "clear and present danger to our national security." He stated that the United States is lacking more than 1,800 mariners to "sustain sealift in a crisis beyond six months." This means

that we may be short nearly two thousand mariners to crew the meager number of sealift vessels available for logistical operations in the Indo-Pacific.

Recognizing this deficiency, you, Ann Phillips, the current head of the Maritime Administration, recently stated that you were "not at all confident" that the Ready Reserve Force ships could be crewed if called upon to respond to a crisis.

The dwindling size of our merchant fleet, which has stayed under 200 ships for over 10 years and is now just a fraction of what it was decades ago, has contributed to the aging and shrinking of the mariner workforce.

## Lack of Readiness

The combined effect of an underfunded and undersized fleet, crewed by an insufficient workforce of mariners, has led to a perfect storm in which the United States appears unprepared to carry out major sealift operations during a crisis. In 2019, the Defense Department conducted the largest exercise of its wartime sealift fleet. The exercise tested the then-61 ship fleet's ability to be activated and put to sea on short notice to support our forces in a crisis. The results were abysmal. Only 40 percent of the ships were ready for mobilization. A 40 percent success rate would not just increase risk for our servicemembers deployed overseas. It fundamentally calls into question the sealift fleet's ability to support major operations in the Indo-Pacific.

Shifting the balance of power back in our favor and strengthening our ability to deny a Chinese invasion of Taiwan require a comprehensive plan that not only increases our offensive capabilities and enhances our defensive posture but also bolsters our logistical assets, especially our sealift fleet. We are quickly running out of time to implement meaningful changes, many of which will take years to fully execute. We must prioritize our attention and resources to restoring our deterrence against China and ensuring that we can succeed in any future conflict.

## Montford Point

Continued from Page 6

The highlight of the symposium was a tour aboard Expeditionary Transfer Dock vessel *USNS Montford Point*, where Sailors learned about the vessel's mission and toured the bridge, engineering spaces and other areas. The tour left an impression on the group.

The *Montford Point* crew really did a great job showing what it is like to be a mariner on an MSC vessel, said King. "They were really excited about their job."

With the success of the first symposium and positive feedback, MSC plans to make it an annual event and to perhaps



expand it to MSC Pacific in the future.

"Our intent is to continue this event yearly and host it on the West Coast as well to accommodate the maximum number of Sailors," said O'Connell.

*USNS Montford Point* Third Mate Steven Corachan talks about the capabilities of the expeditionary transfer dock vessel with Military Sealift Command Reserve enlisted Sailors on the bridge during a ship tour. More than 100 Reserve Sailors attended a four-day symposium hosted by MSC at Naval Station Norfolk, Virginia. It was the first time MSC held a symposium for its Reserve Sailors to help them gain a better understanding of the command's mission.

AMO Safety and Education Plan – Simulation, Training, Assessment & Research (STAR) Center


(954) 920-3222 / (800) 942-3220 – 2 West Dixie Highway, Dania Beach, FL 33004

General Courses									
Advanced Fire Fighting	5 Days	15 April	12 August						
Advanced Fire Fighting Refresher	2 Days	1 April							
Basic Safety Training – All 4 modules must be completed within 12 months: Personal Safety Techniques (Monday/Tuesday – 1.5 days), Personal Safety & Social Responsibility (Tuesday PM – half-day), Elementary First Aid (Wednesday – 1 day), Fire Fighting & Fire Prevention (Thursday/Friday – 2 days) – not required if Combined Basic and Advanced Fire Fighting completed within 12 months.				5 Days	1 April				
Basic Safety Training – Refresher – required for STCW renewal for those without 360 days of sea service in 5 years	3 Days	3 April							
Basic Training and Advanced Fire Fighting Revalidation (Required for STCW renewal) – required for those with 360 days sea service in five years	2 Days	18 March	8, 22 April	6, 20 May	10, 24 June	8, 29 July	5, 26 August	12, 30 September	
Chemical Safety – Advanced	5 Days	30 Sept.							
Combined Basic & Advanced Low Flash Point Fuel Operations (IGF Code/LNG Fuel) Course	5 Days	11 March	10 June	19 August					
Confined Space Entry	3 Days	8 May	1 July						
Environmental Awareness (includes Oily Water Separator)	3 Days	Please Call							
Fast Rescue Boat	4 Days	19 March	16 April	4 June	27 August	17 September			
GMDSS – Requires after-hour homework	10 Days	15 July							
Leadership & Management (required by ALL management level Deck and Engine officers by 1 January 2017)	5 Days	11 March	20 May	24 June	8 July	16 September			
LNG Tankerman PIC – available online	8 Days	10 July							
LNG Simulator Training – Enrollment priority in the LNG simulator course is given to qualified member candidates for employment and/or observation opportunities with AMO contracted LNG companies. In all cases successful completion of the LNG PNC classroom course is prerequisite.				5 Days	22 July				
Proficiency in Survival Craft (Lifeboat)	4 Days	28 May	30 July						
Proficiency in Survival Craft (Lifeboat) REFRESHER	1 Day	6 April							
Safety Officer Course (also see online schedule)	2 Days	4 March	10 April	4 July					
Tankerman PIC DL – Classroom (also see online schedule)	5 Days	Please Call							
Tankerman PIC DL – Simulator	10 Days	22 April	17 June	8 July	12 August	16 September			
Train the Trainer – requires after hours homework	5 Days	11 March	13 May	12 August					
Vessel/Company Security Officer – Includes Anti-Piracy (also see online schedule)	3 Days	24 April	26 June	11 Sept.					
Deck Courses									
Advanced Bridge Resource Management	5 Days	13 May							
Advanced Shiphandling for Masters/Senior Deck Officers – (no equivalency) must have sailed as Chief Mate Unlimited	5 Days	15 April	24 June	26 August					
Advanced Shiphandling for 3rd Mates – 60 days seetime equivalency for 3rd Mates	10 Days	4 March	29 April	3 June	15 July	9 September			
Advanced and Emergency Shiphandling – First Class Pilots, Great Lakes	5 Days	Please Call							
Basic Meteorology	5 Days	Please Call							
Dynamic Positioning – Induction (Basic)	5 Days	11 March	6 May	8 July	16 Sept.				
Dynamic Positioning – Simulator (Advanced)	5 Days	15 April	19 August						
Dynamic Positioning - REVALIDATION / REFRESHER and Competency Assessment (Please specify Revalidation or Refresher on course application)	5 Days	10 June	12 August						
ECDIS	5 Days	19 August							
Electronic Navigation and Watchkeeping (ECDIS) Refresher	3 Days	10 April	12 June						
High Risk and Emergency Shiphandling for Masters (Must have completed Advanced Shiphandling for Masters and sailed as Master)	5 Days	18 March	20 May	29 July	23 September				
Navigational Watchkeeping Standardization & Assessment Program	5 Days	20 May	29 July	16 Sept.					
TOAR (Towing Officer Assessment Record) – Third Mate (Unlimited or Great Lakes) or 1600T Master License required AND OICNW required	5 Days	26 August							
Tug Training – ASD Assist	5 Days	22 April							



AMO members and applicants are asked to register for courses as far in advance as possible, and to submit a course application even if the preferred course/start date has a wait list

AMO members and applicants are asked to submit an application for course registration as far in advance of the course’s start date as possible for all courses. Applications received less than 60 days in advance of a course’s start date are more difficult to accommodate. AMO members and applicants are also asked to submit an application for their preferred course and start date even if there is a wait list. STAR Center is sometimes able to accommodate those who are on a course wait list.



Deck Upgrade – STCW 2010 – Management Level (NVIC 10-14) – Completion of both required and optional courses listed below will include all Task Assessments required by NVIC 10-14, providing ECDIS, GMDSS and ARPA have been previously completed. See STAR Center’s website for full details: <a href="http://www.STAR-Center.com/STCW2010-deck.upgrade.html">http://www.STAR-Center.com/STCW2010-deck.upgrade.html</a> .									
Upgrade: Shiphandling at the Management Level (includes SAR)	10 Days	4 March	1 April	6 May	3, 17 June	15 July	12 August	30 Sept.	
Upgrade: Advanced Meteorology – Requires after-hours homework	5 Days	1, 22 April	13 May	24 June	15 July	30 Sept.			
Advanced Stability (also see online schedule on page 10)	5 Days	18 March	6 May	29 July	26 August	16 Sept.			
Management of Medical Care (also see online schedule on page 10)	Half-Day	24 April	5 June	31 July	13 Sept.				
Leadership & Management (also see online schedule on page 10)	5 Days	11 March	20 May	24 June	8 July	16 Sept.			
Advanced Cargo – Optional for task sign-off (also see online schedule on page 10)	5 Days	4 March	1 April	13 May	22 July	19 August	23 Sept.		
Marine Propulsion Plants – Optional for task sign-off	5 Days	20 May	3 June	8 July	23 Sept.				
Advanced Celestial – Optional for task sign-off	5 Days	11 March	29 April	22 July	9 Sept.				
Advanced Navigation – Optional for task sign-off	5 Days	8 April	20 May	8 July	26 August				
Engineering Courses									
Electrical and Instrumentation Troubleshooting (Professional Development)	5 Days	22 April	22 July						
Control Systems Troubleshooting (Professional Development)	5 Days	29 April	29 July						
Diesel Endorsement (Crossover)	4 Weeks	Please Call							
Engine Room Resource Management (Simulator)	5 Days	6 May							
Engine Operations Training and Assessment Program	5 Days	20 May	26 August						
Gas Turbine Endorsement	2 Weeks	Please Call							
Marine High Voltage Safety Course (Simulator)	5 Days	29 July							
Hydraulics / Pneumatics (Professional Development)	5 Days	11 March	10 June	9 Sept.					
Machine Shop 1 (Professional Development)	5 Days	10 June	23 Sept.						
Machine Shop 2 (must complete Machine Shop 1)	5 Days	4 March	17 June	30 Sept.					
Programmable Logic Controllers (PLCs) (Does not include EPA Universal)	5 Days	6 May	5 August						
Refrigeration & Air Conditioning	5 Days	17 June	16 Sept.						
Steam Endorsement	4 Weeks	Please Call							
Welding 1 – Professional Development	5 Days	15 April	9 Sept.						
Welding 2 (must complete Welding 1 prior to enrolling)	5 Days	22 April	16 Sept.						
Engine Upgrade – STCW 2010 – Management Level (NVIC 15-14) – Completion of both required and optional courses listed below will include all Task Assessments required by NVIC 15-14. See STAR Center’s website for full details: <a href="https://www.star-center.com/stcw2010-engine.upgrade.html">https://www.star-center.com/stcw2010-engine.upgrade.html</a>									
Leadership & Managerial Skills (G500 as amended) – REQUIRED	5 Days	11 March	20 May	24 June	8 July	16 Sept.			
ERM (E050 as amended) – REQUIRED (unless previously taken for gap closing or original license) Note: if your current OICEW endorsement does not have a limitation, you should not require this for upgrade.	5 Days	6 May	29 July						
Upgrade: Electrical, Electronics & Control Engineering (Management Level) (E133 as amended) (UPGRADE with tasks) Required unless previously taken for gap closing or original license	5 Days	18 March	13 May	15 July					
STCW Upgrade Task Assessment – General: This class is required by all propulsion types (Motor, Gas and Steam) Licensed engineers – OPTIONAL: Tasks can be signed off onboard	5 Days	4 March	29 April	22 July					
Medical Courses									
Elementary First Aid – Prerequisite for MCP within preceding 6 months	1 Day	2 April	7 May	11 June	23 July	17 September			
Medical Care Provider – Prerequisite for MPIC within preceding 6 months. Please fax EFA certificate when registering	3 Days	3 April	8 May	12 June	24 July	18 September			
Medical PIC – Please FAX MCP certificate when registering	5 Days	4 March	8 April	13 May	17 June	29 July	23 Sept.		
Urinalysis Collector Training	1 Day	11 March	15 April	20 May	24 June	5 August	30 Sept.		
Screening Test Technician – QEDs a.m./Alco Mate 7000 p.m.	Half-Day	12 March	16 April	21 May	25 June	6 August			
Self-Study, CDs and Online Courses									
Anti-Terrorism Level 1 – Online				Qualified Assessor – Online					
DOT Hazardous Materials Transportation Training – Online				Vessel General Permit EPA – On campus in conjunction with other classes					



# AMO members and applicants can register online for STAR Center courses

STAR Center is no longer accepting paper course registration applications by FAX, nor scanned paper applications by email. AMO members and applicants will need to register for courses on the STAR Center website. With a phone, scan the QR code to open a link to the online course registration form, or in the address bar of a Web browser, enter the following URL: [www.star-center.com/forms/reg.mbr.live.html](http://www.star-center.com/forms/reg.mbr.live.html)



Military Sealift Command Training Program – The core MSC courses noted below are required for initial MSC employment. Other MSC courses listed are only required as assigned duties require.									
CORE Basic CBR Defense – Refresher required every 5 years	1 Day	7 March	12 April	16 May	20 June	18 July	22 August	27 Sept.	
CORE Damage Control – Refresher required every 5 years	1 Day	6 March	10 April	15 May	19 June	17 July	21 August	25 Sept.	
CORE Helicopter Fire Fighting – Refresher required every 5 years	1 Day	5 March	11 April	14 May	18 June	16 July	20 August	26 Sept.	
CORE Marine Environmental Program (with CBRD) – Refresher required every 5 years	Half-Day	7 March	12 April	16 May	20 June	18 July	22 August	27 Sept.	
MSC Readiness Refresher – Must have completed full CBRD & DC once in career	2 Days	4 March	13 May	17 June	15 July	19 August			
MSC ATO Level II – Required every 3 years by Master once during career (unless designated ATO)	5 Days	1 April	8 July						
MSC CBRD Officer – Required every five years and successful completion of the annual refresher/indoctrination training is a prerequisite	5 Days	29 April	5 August						
MSC Watchstander – BASIC – once in career, SST graduates are grandfathered	1 Day	4 March	15 April	15 July	16 Sept.				
MSC Watchstander – ADVANCED – annual requirement for all SRF members	1 Day	1, 5, 15, 22 March	12, 16, 26 April	10, 24 May	7, 14, 28 June	12, 16 July	2, 9, 23, 30 August	13, 17, 27 September	
MSC Ship Reaction Force – Required every three years for SRF members and must have Basic and a valid Advanced Watchkeeping and a valid Small Arms	3 Days	6 March	3, 17 April	15 May	17 July	18 Sept.			
Small Arms – Initial & Sustainment (Refresher) Training – Open to members & applicants eligible for employment through AMO (w/in 1 year) or MSC on MARAD contracted vessels.	4 Days	11, 18 March	8, 22, 29 April	6, 20 May	3, 10, 24 June	8, 29 July	5, 19, 26 August	9, 23, 30 September	
Radar Courses									
Radar Recertification	1 Day	1 April							
Electronic Navigation and Watchkeeping (ECDIS) Refresher	3 Days	10 April	12 June						
ARPA	4 Days	Please Call							
Radar Recertification & ARPA	5 Days	Please Call							
Original Radar Observer Unlimited	5 Days	Please Call							
ONLINE Blended Management Level Upgrade Classes (Deck and Engine) – STAR Center is offering the following courses ONLINE. WHERE SHOWN, FULLY ONLINE CLASSES INCLUDE ALL ASSESSMENTS AND TRAVEL TO STAR CENTER IS NOT REQUIRED. By USCG approval requirements, Practical Exercises and Competency Assessments for blended courses will have to be taken at STAR Center. This will be scheduled in a comprehensive 5-day session.									
Leadership and Management (Deck and Engine) – FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	20 May	8 July						
Advanced Navigation (Deck) – FULLY ONLINE	3 Days	Please Call							
Marine Propulsion Plant (Deck) – FULLY ONLINE	3 Days	Please Call							
Advanced Stability (Deck) FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	26 August							
Advanced Cargo (Deck) FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	19 August							
Advanced Celestial (Deck) Blended Assessment at STAR Center	4 Days	22 April	5 August						
Upgrade: Electrical, Electronics, & Control Engineering (Engine) – FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	18 March	15 July						
Combined Basic and Advanced Low Flash Point Fuel Operations – FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	Please Call							
LNG Tankerman PIC – FULLY ONLINE	8 Days	Please Call							
Tankerman PIC DL – Classroom – FULLY ONLINE	5 Days	Please Call							
Vessel Security Officer (VSO) – FULLY ONLINE	3 Days	Please Call							
Management of Medical Care – FULLY ONLINE	Half-Day	24 April							
Assessments (at STAR Center) DECK and ENGINE									
Advanced Celestial (Deck)	2 Days	12 June							

NOTICE: AMO members planning to attend STAR Center in Dania Beach, Florida – either to prepare for license upgrading or to undergo specialty training—are asked to call the school to confirm course schedule and space availability in advance.

NOTICE OF NON-DISCRIMINATION POLICY AS TO STUDENTS: The Simulation, Training, Assessment and Research Center (STAR), established under the auspices of the American Maritime Officers Safety and Education Plan, admit students of any race, color, national and ethnic origin or sex to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the Center. It does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national or ethnic origin or sex in administration of its educational policies, admission policies and other programs administered by the Center.





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(954) 920-3222 Extension 201  
(800) 942-3220 Extension 201  
register@star-center.com  
Course Attendance Confirmation: (800) 942-3220 Extension 200  
24 Hours: (954) 920-3222 Extension 7999

## SERVICES

AMO MEMBERS & APPLICANTS: UPDATE CREDENTIALS, DOCUMENTS, TRAINING RECORDS  
Secure File Upload: <https://www.amo-union.org>  
**Select LOGIN/MEMBER LOGIN to access Member Portal**  
Questions: (800) 362-0513 Extension 1050  
E-mail: memberservices@amo-union.org

**AMO Coast Guard Legal Aid Program**  
Michael Reny  
**Mobile: (419) 346-1485**  
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Dania Beach, FL 33004-4312  
(954) 927-5213

# AMO PLANS CONTACT INFORMATION

AMO Plans normal business hours are Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Eastern.

**Phone: (800) 348-6515**  
To request a connection with a specific person, dial “0” for the operator.  
Medical Customer Service: extension 12  
Retirement Services – Pension, 401(k), MPB, and Defined Contribution: extension 14  
Vacation: extension 15

E-mail – Medical Plan: amomedical@amoplans.com  
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E-mail – Retirement Services: amopension@amoplans.com  
FAX – Retirement Services: (954) 922-7539  
FAX – Medical Plan: (954) 920-9482  
FAX – Vacation Plan: (954) 926-7274



# Keel laid, steel cut at Philly Shipyard for fourth and fifth National Security Multi-Mission Vessels

TOTE Services, LLC and Philly Shipyard, Inc. on December 6 marked a significant construction milestone at a keel laying ceremony for the fourth of five new purpose built, state-of-the-art training vessels for America's state maritime academies.

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Maritime Administration (MARAD) new vessel program – known as National Security Multi-Mission Vessels (NSMVs) – was designed to provide world-class training for America's future mariners and to support humanitarian assistance and disaster relief missions in times of need.

"We extend a warm welcome back to the Texas A&M Maritime Academy leadership and cadets as we celebrate another milestone in the progression of the ship, *Lone Star State*," said President and CEO of Philly Shipyard Steinar Nerbovik. "We remain honored to be the shipbuilder of choice for this revolutionary new-build program, and are proud to work alongside of TOTE Services and MARAD on a program that will positively impact the many generations of maritime cadets that follow."

TOTE Services is the vessel construc-

tion manager (VCM) for the NSMV program, the first government shipbuilding program to use the VCM contract model. This innovative approach enables shipyards to apply commercial best practices for design and construction to government vessels.

"We are excited to celebrate this significant achievement today as we continue working to fulfill our commitment to MARAD and our nation's future cadets by delivering the modern training platforms they deserve," said TOTE Services President Jeff Dixon. "There is growing interest in the VCM contract model and its potential applica-

bility to government shipbuilding programs to reduce costs, accelerate delivery times, and build more vessels."

On February 9, TOTE Services, Philly Shipyard and California State University Maritime Academy celebrated the cutting of steel for the fifth National Security Multi-Mission Vessel, which is destined for Cal Maritime in Vallejo, California.

This ceremonial event signifies the start of construction for the vessel and occurred at Philly Shipyard's plasma cutting machine as the button was pressed to start the plasma steel cutting process.



## AMO onboard as *Golden State* completes shipyard maintenance

Above: Members of American Maritime Officers working on the tanker *Golden State* as the ship was in drydock undergoing maintenance at Grand Bahama Shipyard in January included Second Assistant Engineer Derek Breunig, Third A.E. Vincent Trabanco-Lopez, Second Mate Christian Zinke, Third Mate Andrew Holland, Chief Mate Merrick D'Ingianni, Captain Erv Curtis, Third Mate Myles Cameron, Third Mate Michael Howard, First A.E. Valentin Hadzhiev and Chief Engineer Christopher Sundquist.



Bosun Timothy Jackson and Captain Curtis in the drydock with the *Golden State*, which is operated by Intrepid Personnel and Provisioning.



Captain Curtis and Chief Engineer Sundquist with the *Golden State* in drydock – AMO represents all licensed officers aboard the tanker.