

USS Honors AMO President Willie Barrere, Crews of *Stena Immaculate* and *El Coquí* at 2025 Admiral of the Ocean Sea Dinner

The United Seamen's Service presented Admiral of the Ocean Sea Awards for 2025 to American Maritime Officers National President Willie Barrere, Chief Operating Officer of Maersk Line, Limited Edward Hanley, and Chief Executive Officer of CMC-ITI-CCS Vincent Marino during the 56th annual AOTOS Awards dinner held October 24 in New York City.

The crew of the *Stena Immaculate* was honored with an AOTOS Special Recognition Plaque and the crew of *El Coquí* was honored with an AOTOS Mariner's Plaque. AMO represents the officers from both ships, although one engineer on the *Immaculate* was a member of the Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association working under a pass-through agreement, and the Seafarers International Union represents the unlicensed crewmembers. Edward Mor-



AOTOS — Page 3



Chief Mate Jaime Torres accepted the Admiral of the Ocean Sea Mariner's Plaque on behalf of the officers and crew of *El Coquí*. Crowley's Jones Act container and roll-on/roll-off ship *El Coquí*, a U.S. Coast Guard aircrew, and local fishermen rescued four U.S. citizens from a life raft north of the Dominican Republic on January 21, 2025. American Maritime Officers represents the licensed officers aboard *El Coquí*, and the

Seafarers International Union represents the unlicensed crew members.

As reported by the United Seamen's Service in the AOTOS Mariner's Plaque presentation: A four-man crew of a 41-foot sailboat on its first international excursion found itself in literal deep waters after striking a submerged rock in the

El Coquí — Page 2



Third Mate Jeff Griffin accepted the Admiral of the Ocean Sea Special Recognition Plaque on behalf of the officers and crew of the *Stena Immaculate*. On March 10, 2025, the *Immaculate* was struck while at anchor by another vessel, the *M/V Solong*. The crew of the *Immaculate* responded valiantly, professionally and bravely, according to Captain Thomas Leaf.

Our crew had nearly put the fire

out — fortunately — when the other vessel attempted to back out of the side of the *Immaculate*, he said. The fire flashed exponentially, overwhelming any further effort made by our dedicated crew. Fire mitigation rapidly turned into vessel abandonment. The crew seamlessly pivoted to leaving the vessel in an orderly fashion.

Stena Immaculate — Page 2

Stena Immaculate

From Page 1

All hands ensured that all members of the *Immaculate's* complement made it to the free-fall lifeboat, Leaf said. Within 12 minutes, all persons made it into the lifeboat and were away from the vessel.

The U.S.-flagged tanker was operating in the Tanker Security Program fleet under contract with AMO and the SIU through a joint venture between Crowley and Stena Bulk USA at the time of the incident.

As reported by the United Seamen's Service in the AOTOS Special Recognition Plaque presentation, Third Mate Jeff Griffin stated: "I poked my head up and saw a ship coming straight at us."

That described the scene in heavy fog off the coast of England for the *Stena Immaculate* while the ship was at anchor.

Seconds later, the Portuguese cargo ship *M/V Solong* crashed into the *Stena Immaculate*, causing 17,000 barrels of fuel in one ruptured tank to ignite across the deck. Despite the sudden chaos, fire teams suited up and began fighting the fire. Initial efforts focused on direct spray to contain the flames, while other teams used foam to allow crewmembers who were trapped forward of the point of impact to escape. These decisive actions were critical to protecting crewmembers' lives, preventing a potential total loss of the vessel and its cargo of aviation fuel, and a potential catastrophic environmental incident in the North Sea near coastal waters of the U.K.

As the fire expanded, the captain gave the order to abandon ship. Prior to leaving their emergency stations, the crew



left critical safety equipment operational, including the fire monitors, fire pumps,

dousing equipment and the inert gas generator — actions that are believed to have

contributed to the limited impacts of the collision and fire on the vessel and its cargo. The crew launched the vessel's lifeboat. The evacuation was conducted amid intense heat, toxic smoke and threat of explosions.

The actions of the *Stena Immaculate* crew stand as a powerful example of bravery, professionalism and unwavering teamwork under extreme and life-threatening conditions. Their efforts not only ensured the safe rescue of all 23 mariners aboard without serious injury, but also prevented the total loss of the vessel, protected critical vessel systems, the cargo of military fuel, and prevented a catastrophic environmental disaster in the North Sea.

El Coquí

From Page 1

Silver Bank waters north of the Dominican Republic. In less than ten minutes, the sailing vessel *Mariposa* took on water and sank after being overtaken by a wave that caused it to roll onto its side.

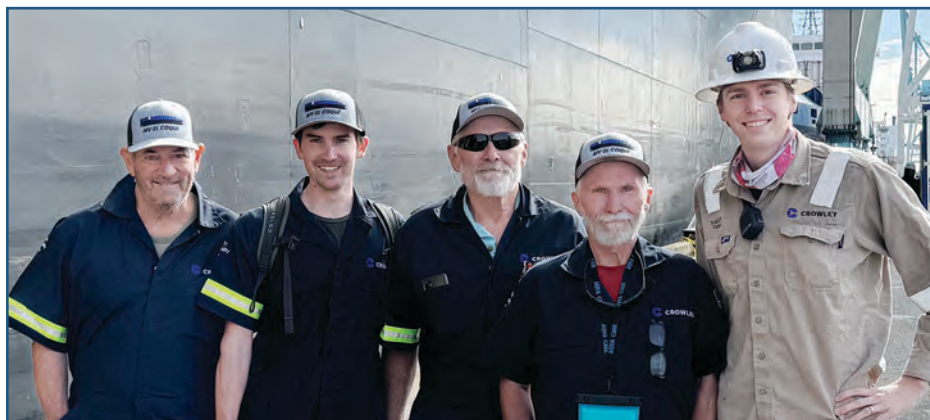
Disaster was averted when the Coast Guard emergency positioning radio signal advised of a vessel in distress roughly 180 miles northwest of Puerto Rico. Coast Guard watchstanders alerted a U.S. Coast Guard aircraft. The crew directed its HC-144 Ocean Sentry aircraft to the scene.

The *M/V El Coquí*, a Jones Act vessel traveling its normal route from San Juan to Jacksonville, received alerts from the Coast Guard and altered its route to search for the vessel in distress. *El Coquí*, fully manned in licensed positions by American Maritime Officers, began a search for the unknown vessel. *El Coquí's* Captain, Kurt Breitfeller, directed his ship to an area 16 nautical miles from his location.

It was a wise decision, as his crew spotted the four men in a life raft in a very rocky area. *El Coquí* was too large to sail directly to the drifting raft and alerted Coast Guard fixed wing aircraft to assist, while fishing vessels launched small boats to snatch the sailboat's crew from the life raft and transfer them to *El Coquí*. Rough terrain and horrible weather conditions made it a



The sailors rescued near the Dominican Republic — David Potts, John Potts, Russell Case and Andrew Cullar — gather for a photo with Captain Kurt Breitfeller, master on the Jones Act combination container and roll-on/roll-off ship *El Coquí*.



The four men were safely transported to Jacksonville, Fla., thanks to the efforts of *El Coquí's* crewmembers, including Third Mate Gavin Cooper.

four-hour effort for a fishing vessel to rendezvous with *El Coquí* and make the transfer. Bosun Juan Carlos Negrón Miro oversaw the SIU team during the rescue effort.

"I told them they were just in the wrong place at the wrong time," said Captain Breitfeller. "But we were in the right place at the right time to render aid."

The four were mentally and physically exhausted, Breitfeller noted, "and literally had to be dragged up the ladder because they could barely make it. In my 36 years, this was my first rescue and it's one of the best feelings as master for things to go so well."

Coast Guard Lt. Hanna Boyce saluted the mariners for both being prepared and having an arsenal of state of the art equipment onboard the ship.

AOTOS

From Page 1

gan was presented with a Special Recognition Plaque in honor of his extraordinary leadership as president of USS by President and Chairman of American Maritime Officers Service F. Anthony Naccarato, the newly elected president of USS.

In accepting the AOTOS Award, Barrere delivered inspiring remarks and a call to action to all representatives of maritime labor and industry attending the maritime community's premier event.

"We have the rare opportunity to bring our U.S. maritime world to higher levels. Together, we all have a responsibility — not only to our industry, but to our nation," Barrere said. "Many of us have seen charts and graphs with the astonishing comparisons of the stagnant U.S. maritime fleet to that of the compounding fleet in China. The United States is the first superpower to have a larger Navy than a Merchant Marine, and we currently struggle to man our vessels — Navy, Military Sealift Command, and commercial ships.

"Military Sealift Command is laying up vessels due to their manning shortage, and there is talk of bringing in foreign seafarers to crew U.S. naval vessels. We can look across the Atlantic at the British who went that direction years ago and now the U.S. Coast Guard is helping train foreign nationals on British naval vessels because the knowledge and skillsets have been lost. We cannot let this happen here," he said.

"For decades after World War II, ours was one of the largest fleets in the world. We are no longer there," Barrere said. "We are not even close and losing ground daily. I think most of us are familiar with the 'three-legged stool' of our industry — ships, personnel, and cargo. We know cargo is king, and to build up our fleet, we need more of it.



Admiral of the Ocean Sea Award recipients for 2025 were Chief Executive Officer of CMC-ITI-CCS Vincent Marino, Chief Operating Officer of Maersk Line, Limited Edward Hanley, and American Maritime Officers National President Willie Barrere.

"There is no magic wand. Cargo preference requirements and tax incentives can be used to motivate U.S. businesses to utilize U.S. vessels. We all need to work together on solid ideas to make more cargo available to our very capable U.S. fleet. American mariners are prepared to deliver it," he said.

"Without more cargo, there is little point in building more ships. Without more ships, there is no point in encouraging academies to continue to growing their enrollments, and there is little point increasing the maritime labor pool more than what we need at this particular time. In other words, we need to create cargo carriage for a strong U.S. maritime future," Barrere said.

For more than half a century, the AOTOS Award has recognized individuals whose leadership, integrity, and vision have advanced the U.S. maritime industry while upholding the welfare of the American seafaring workforce.

Barrere is an accomplished captain,

seasoned union leader and a steadfast champion of U.S. maritime labor. A graduate of the U.S. Merchant Marine Academy, he spent 32 years at sea, with 27 of those as captain aboard Crowley and Maersk vessels, before coming ashore to work for AMO.

Hanley has dedicated more than four decades to strengthening U.S.-flag shipping, earning a reputation as one of the most respected and effective leaders in the U.S. maritime industry. With a career marked by operational excellence, strategic vision, and an unshakable commitment to seafarers, Hanley has championed the growth of the U.S.-flag fleet and the safety, dignity and welfare of those who sail under it. As a seasoned labor relations expert and longtime COO of Maersk Line, Limited, he has played a critical role in bringing new tonnage under U.S. registry and ensuring that crews are supported, not only with jobs, but with safe, stable, and honorable careers.

A graduate of the U.S. Merchant Ma-

rine Academy at Kings Point, Hanley holds dual licenses in navigation and engineering and served in the U.S. Naval Reserve. His leadership spans key executive positions at Sea-Land Service and U.S. Ship Management, where he earned the trust of both labor and management for his rare ability to balance operational demands with an unwavering focus on mariner safety and workforce development. He has been a driving force in advancing shipboard safety standards and investing in the systems and people that keep vessels moving, and crews protected.

Vincent Marino is a leader in inter-modal operations, whose commitment to safety, workforce development, and strong labor partnerships has helped shape the backbone of American cargo movement. As CEO of CMC-ITI-CCS, Marino has transformed the company his parents founded over half a century ago into a powerful, multi-regional network of equipment service facilities spanning the East Coast, Gulf, Midsouth, and Midwest. Under his leadership, the company has remained grounded in its founding values of family, integrity, and respect for labor, while pushing forward with bold operational growth.

Throughout his career, Marino has viewed organized labor not as a challenge to overcome, but as a cornerstone of success. He has earned deep respect across the labor-management spectrum for his consistent investment in the workforce and his unwavering commitment to labor stability. His hands-on leadership has fostered long-standing partnerships with labor unions, built on mutual trust, transparency, and a shared priority: creating safe, well-paying, and sustainable jobs. His forward-thinking strategies in container maintenance, repair, refurbishment, and drayage support have not only kept cargo moving efficiently but have set new standards for safety and reliability in the field.

"These are leaders who never forgot where they came from. They have built trust with crews, strengthened labor partnerships, and fought to keep the American maritime workforce resilient, respected, and ready. Their unwavering dedication to seafarers and to the values that define our industry makes them ideal recipients of this prestigious award," said Chairman of the USS AOTOS Committee LTG Kenneth Wykle, USA (retired).

Proceeds from AOTOS benefit the USS global network of seafarer support services, which provide aid and facilities to American mariners, allied crews, and U.S. military personnel overseas.

President of the Seafarers International Union David Heindel served as dinner chairman, with F. Anthony Naccarato of American Maritime Officers Service and Joseph Cox of Cox Maritime LLC as national committee co-chairmen. USS is led by President Naccarato and Executive Director Roger Korner.



MONTHLY AMO 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:

January 7*, February 4, March 4

** The January 2026 membership meeting will be held the first Wednesday in January due to a conflict with previously-scheduled meetings of the AMO Plans Board of Trustees.*

Members of the AMO National Executive Board congratulate Jaime Torres and Jeff Griffin after they accepted awards on behalf of their shipmates and vessels during the Admiral of the Ocean Sea dinner on October 24 in New York City.

FOLLOW AMO ON SOCIAL MEDIA



MSC Publishes New Requirement for Weapons Qualifications; Training for AMO Members Available at STAR Center

MSC Security Watchstander Advanced and Small Arms Training at STAR Center

The Military Sealift Command (MSC) Headquarters Mission Assurance Newsletter for Q4 2025 was issued on October 2. Page 4 of the newsletter contains critical information for AMO members in need of Small Arms and Security Watchstander Advanced (SWS-A) training. The information published is as follows:

SWS-A Requirement

- OPNAV 5530 and SECNAV 5500 **require all personnel who will be armed in the performance of their duties to complete annual non-lethal weapons training.**
 - For MSC, this training is conducted during SWS-A, typically on day five of the course.
 - **Certificates for weapons qualifications will no longer be issued without completion of SWS-A.**
 - To comply with higher headquarters guidance, **SWS-A is required for ALL**

personnel who will be armed, including Masters/Captains and others issued fire-arms for self-defense only.

- Important: **Without a current SWS-A qualification, weapons qualifications are considered null and void.**

Given this announcement, **effective immediately**, STAR Center will assign seats only in Small Arms classes with enrollment in that week's SWS-A class. Small Arms certificates will not be issued until SWS-A is completed.

For CONMARs, the Security Watchstander BASIC (SWS-B) course is normally required only once in your career, although some contracts may have a different periodicity. OPCOs should refer to the specific contract to be sure of their requirement. SWS-B training can only be met in an approved half-day course, which STAR Center offers.

Any questions regarding MSC Small Arms and SWS courses should be directed to Patrick Jones, Manager, Small Arms Training, at 1-800-942-3220 Ext. 7270 or via e-mail: pjones@star-center.com.

Enrollment questions or applications should be directed to Student Services at 1-800-942-3220 Ext. 201 or via e-mail: register@star-center.com.

AMO Members and Former Classmates Train at STAR Center

Completing the Advanced Shiphandling for Third Mates Course in November at STAR Center were 2024 U.S. Merchant Marine Academy classmates Joseph Flynn, Kaleb Cunningham, Kenobi Kinch, Ellary Boyd, Preston Hass and Tyler Reistetter. Flanking the class are Captain Karl Carr (audit) and Captain Kristin Mangold (instructor).



Current Course Schedule Available on the STAR Center Website



The current STAR Center course schedule is available on the STAR Center website at the address below. The STAR Center schedule will no longer be printed in the AMO newspaper. The STAR Center course schedule is also sent by email each month to AMO-contracted vessels and to AMO members and applicants at the email address each has on file with the union.

www.star-center.com/schedule.html

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



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.

Routine Operations Resuming at U.S. Coast Guard RECs, Recent Information on Expiring Credentials

The following is excerpted from recent bulletins released by the U.S. Coast Guard. The first section addresses resumption of routine operations at Regional Examination Centers.

Funding for the Federal Government has been restored, and the National Maritime Center (NMC) and Regional Examination Centers (RECs) are in the process of resuming services to mariners. Full resumption of services at the RECs will be phased in to allow prioritization of our most critical services and to accommodate mariners most impacted by the furlough.

E-mail submission of applications and supporting documentation remains active. Walk-in and scheduled counter service at the RECs remained suspended through November 21, 2025, to allow REC employees to prioritize the backlog in screening applications and scheduling mariner examinations.

Starting November 24, 2025, RECs began returning to routine operations, including availability to schedule exams for all mariners. Because of existing staffing shortages, some RECs may continue to have limited services.

The following information is excerpted from the most recent update on National Maritime Center operations (#3) released earlier in November:

To mitigate the impact caused by the government shutdown, the NMC has implemented the following measures:

- E-mail submission of applications and supporting documentation remains active. Processing will resume once appropriations are restored.
- **Merchant Mariner Credentials (National Endorsements only) and Medical Certificates (National and Pilot expiration dates only) that expired in October and November 2025 remain valid until January 31, 2026. Mariners who are actively working on expired credentials that meet the expiration criteria must carry the expired credential AND a copy of the attached letter while sailing under the authority of those creden-**

tials. The NMC will not issue separate or replacement MMCs or Medical Certificates reflecting the extension.

The letter referred to in the above bullet point is on the third page of the USCG bulletin, "Lapse in Appropriations and Government Shutdown UPDATE #3: Mitigation Efforts - Extensions," which is available on the NMC website.

www.dco.uscg.mil/national_maritime_center

- Additional information letters, approval to test letters, and mariner training course completion certificates that expired in October and November 2025 are extended until January 31, 2026. The NMC will not issue updated letters reflecting the extension.
 - Qualified Assessor and Designated Examiner certification letters and course approvals that expired October 31, 2025, remain extended to February 28, 2026. Those that expired on November 30, 2025, are extended until March 31, 2026. The NMC will not issue updated certificates/letters reflecting the extension.
 - Mariner Examinations:
 - Mariners who began but did not complete all modules of an examination prior to October 1, 2025, may resume testing without penalty once the NMC reopens. Testing should be completed within 60 days of reopening. Contact the NMC regarding waivers due to sea service.
 - 90-day retest periods are paused beginning on October 1, 2025, and will restart upon reopening. Contact the NMC regarding waivers due to sea service.
- For updates on NMC and REC operating statuses, please monitor the NMC website. For questions, contact our Customer Service Center via the NMC online chat system on the NMC website, by e-mailing IASKNMC@uscg.mil, or by calling 1-888-IASKNMC (427-5662).

AMO Members Load and Deliver on the Great Lakes



AMO President Willie Barrere met with American Maritime Officers members onboard the *Great Republic* in August, including Steward Peder Oase, First Mate Brennan Minor, Captain Tyler Thompson and Second Assistant Engineer Sam Briggs.



Second Mate Patrick Gillespie met with AMO President Willie Barrere onboard the *Walter J. McCarthy Jr.* as the ASC vessel loaded at Superior Midwest Energy Terminal in August. AMO represents the licensed officers aboard the *McCarthy*.

The *M/V Great Republic* unloads stone in Superior, Wis. in August. American Maritime Officers represents the licensed officers and stewards onboard the *Key Lakes* vessel.



AMO, SIU, Maritime Community Honor Crew of *El Faro* 10 Years After Tragic Loss in Hurricane Joaquin

On October 1, members of American Maritime Officers, the Seafarers International Union and the maritime community across the nation paid tribute to the 33 men and women who lost their lives at sea in the sinking of the *S/S El Faro* on October 1, 2015.

Eleven AMO members, 17 SIU members and a riding gang of five died when *El Faro*, which was sailing from Jacksonville to Puerto Rico, was sunk by Hurricane Joaquin as the storm ravaged the Caribbean.

At STAR Center in Dania Beach, Fla., AMO and AMO Plans held a memorial service at the *El Faro* monument erected in the butterfly garden on campus.

AMO National President Willie Barrere, who sailed with a number of the *El Faro* mariners, addressed the gathering and talked about how the union and the maritime industry have continued to honor the legacy of the *El Faro* crew.

"The loss of these mariners was not in vain. The tragedy of the *El Faro* forced the



industry, regulators, and all of us to take a harder look at safety, training, and accountability. Changes have been made. Lives have been protected," he said. "And while no reform can ever ease the grief of the families, the legacy of the *El Faro* is carried forward in every mariner who now sails

under stronger protections, and in every life saved, because of what was learned from this tragic loss."

In Jacksonville, Fla., TOTE Services and the Seafarers International Union held memorial services celebrating and remembering the lives of the crewmembers.

Many of the lost SIU members sailed out of the Jacksonville union hall and lived in the community. TOTE owned and operated the *S/S El Faro*.

Five of the AMO members lost in the *El Faro* tragedy were graduates of Maine Maritime Academy, where a memorial ceremony was held October 1 in Castine.

The community in Rockland, Maine gathered at the "El Faro Salute!" monument on September 27 for a ceremony of remembrance of the *El Faro* crew.

AMO East Coast Representative Marissa Cap, who had sailed with one of the lost mariners, addressed the crowd at the ceremony and delivered a promise that holds true for all AMO members.

"To the families, I want to say this: Your loved ones are not forgotten. They live on in our memories, in the lessons we carry, and in the community that's gathered here today," she said. "And I promise that we will remain united and will work toward a safer future for all mariners."



Top center: AMO National President Willie Barrere addresses a gathering of AMO members, AMO and AMO Plans officials and staff, and members of the community at the *El Faro* memorial on the AMO Plans campus on October 1, 2025.

Above left: A moment of silence is held at the SIU memorial service in Jacksonville, Fla. at the monument for the *El Faro* crew.

Above right: AMO East Coast Representative Marissa Cap spoke at the *El Faro* memorial service in Rockland, Maine on September 27 at the site of "El Faro Salute!" — the memorial sculpture created in honor of the ship's crew by Maine artist Jay Sawyer, a graduate of Maine Maritime Academy who sailed as an engineer in the U.S. Merchant Marine. When *El Faro Salute!* was first presented to the public, Sawyer said he hoped the memorial will comfort the families of those lost aboard *El Faro*. The artist added he hoped the memorial will give the public a greater appreciation of the sacrifices made by those who go to sea.



Michael C. Davidson • Richard J. Pusatere • Steven W. Shultz • Jeffrey A. Mathias • Danielle L. Randolph
Keith W. Griffin • Jeremie H. Riehm • Howard J. Schoenly • Michael L. Holland • Mitchell T. Kuflik
Dylan O. Meklin • Roan R. Lightfoot • Brookie L. Davis • Frank J. Hamm • Carey J. Hatch • Jack E. Jackson
Jackie R. Jones Jr. • Sylvester C. Crawford Jr. • Joe E. Hargrove • German A. Solar-Cortes
Anthony S. Thomas • Louis M. Champa • Roosevelt L. Clark • James P. Porter • Mariette Wright
Theodore E. Quammie • Lashawn L. Rivera • Lonnie S. Jordan • Piotr M. Krause • Marcin Nita
Jan Podgórski • Andrzej R. Truszkowski • Rafal A. Zdobyeh

Mariners of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* Honored During Memorial Ceremony at Great Lakes Maritime Academy

By Pete Kinsey
Great Lakes Representative

The 29 crewmembers lost on the *Edmund Fitzgerald* were honored during a ceremony hosted by the Great Lakes Maritime Academy on November 10 — 50 years from the date of the vessel’s sinking on Lake Superior in 1975.

STAR Center Director of Training Jerry Pannell and GLMA Superintendent Rear Adm. Jerry Achenbach delivered addresses during the memorial ceremony. American Maritime Officers East Coast Representative Marissa Cap and I attended the ceremony. We joined the community, our maritime industry partners, and GLMA cadets, alumni, and personnel in honoring the mariners lost in this tragic casualty.

In his address, Jerry Pannell spoke directly to the realities faced by mariners in licensed service on the Lakes. His message was clear, direct, and grounded in experience, resonating with those in attendance.

On November 10, 1975, the *Edmund Fitzgerald* was less than 20 miles from the safety of Whitefish Bay when it vanished from radar, Pannell said. “No distress call was sent. No survivors were found. The storm that struck Lake Superior that night was brutal — hurricane-force winds with waves exceeding 30 feet. It tested the limits of every man, every rivet, every inch of steel.

“Among those aboard were American Maritime Officers members — licensed deck and engineering officers who served with the highest professionalism and skill. Like every mariner, they understood the risks. And like every mariner, they sailed anyway.”

Pannell continued: “Today, we do not gather in grief alone. We gather in remembrance, in respect, and in renewed



commitment. We remember the names of the 29 lost. We respect the gravity of

what it means to work these waters. “To the families of the 29 men: your



loved ones are not forgotten,” Pannell said. “Their memory lives on in the steel of every ship, in the curriculum of every maritime classroom, and in the watchful eyes of every mariner who looks to the horizon and remembers what’s at stake.

“May the legacy of the *Edmund Fitzgerald* continue to guide us,” he said. “Not simply as a story of loss, but as a call to action — a reminder of why we must always put safety first, why we must support and train the professionals who crew our vessels, and why we must never take lightly the power of the Great Lakes.”

The memorial was held outdoors on the academy waterfront in below-freezing temperatures with steady snowfall. Cadets stood in formation throughout the ceremony. Following the program, attendees placed carnations into Lake Michigan. The conditions on the shoreline reflected the kind of weather Great Lakes mariners routinely face in November.

The *Edmund Fitzgerald*, a 729-foot Great Lakes ore carrier, sank on November 10, 1975, during a severe Lake Superior storm while sailing from Superior, Wis., to Detroit, Mich. All 29 crewmembers were lost. As noted, the officers were represented by our union, a point of lasting significance for the membership of AMO. The loss remains one of the most examined and consequential maritime tragedies on the Great Lakes.

For Great Lakes mariners, the annual memorial is not symbolic — it reflects the harsh realities of their profession. The lessons of past casualties continue to shape training, seamanship, and safety culture today. AMO’s participation in the memorial underscores the union’s continued commitment to maritime education and to the next generation of licensed officers.

Fifty years later, the names of the 29 sailors are remembered, and the responsibility and vigilance of our profession endures among those who sail today.

Michael E. Armagost • Fred J. Beetcher • Thomas D. Bentsen • Edward F. Bindon
Thomas D. Borgeson • Oliver J. Champeau • Nolan S. Church • Ransom E. Cundy
Thomas E. Edwards • Russell G. Haskell • George J. Holl • Bruce L. Hudson
Allen G. Kalmon • Gordon F. MacLellan • Joseph W. Mazes • John H. McCarthy
Ernest M. McSorley • Eugene W. O’Brien • Karl A. Peckol • John J. Poviach • James A. Pratt
Robert C. Rafferty • Paul M. Riippa • John D. Simmons • William J. Spengler
Mark A. Thomas • Ralph G. Walton • David E. Weiss • Blaine H. Wilhelm



AMO Honors OBMG's Positive Impact on Maritime Industry as Organization Celebrates 30th Anniversary



American Maritime Officers National President Willie Barrere greets SUNY Maritime cadets attending the Organization of Black Maritime Graduates 30th Anniversary Scholarship Gala in October.

In October, American Maritime Officers President Willie Barrere and union staff attended the Organization of Black Maritime Graduates (OBMG) 30th Anniversary Scholarship Gala in Throggs Neck, New York. The event celebrated OBMG's 30 years

of expanding pathways for underserved communities to pursue seagoing careers.

As a primary sponsor of the event, AMO contributed to OBMG's scholarship fund, which primarily supports SUNY Maritime cadets and helps advance the



AMO members attending the OBMG 30th Anniversary Scholarship Gala in October in New York included Chief Engineer Sterling Pearson (second from right), here with AMO President Willie Barrere and OBMG founders Captain Robert Cook and Captain Howard Wyche.

organization's mentorship programs.

For 30 years, OBMG has been dedicated to helping provide scholarships for deserving cadets and students pursuing maritime careers, and has promoted greater minority participation in the

maritime industry.

"Mentorship, education, and outreach are the foundation of lasting change," Barrere said. "Together with OBMG, we're investing in the next generation of mariners who will carry our industry forward."

Breast Cancer Awareness Month Observed on AMO Plans Campus



STAR Center held a breast cancer awareness rally in Dania Beach, Fla. in October to support the fight for a cure and those battling the disease. Apprentice engineers of the TECH Program joined the fight against breast cancer by voluntarily shaving their heads during the month of October and wearing pink throughout the month. Members of TECH 118 (above) included Stephen Swaby, Bernardo Garcia-Zia, Simeon Wilson, Joel Delgado, Nassim Dandahsi, Robert White, Josh Rivera and John Tombone. Members of TECH 115 (below) included Demetrius Belizario, Celestino Bautista, Robert Eckel and John Cunningham.



AMO Joins Industry Leaders at Women Offshore Conference



Representing American Maritime Officers at the Women Offshore Conference in Houston, Texas in October were Johna Winters, AMO Career Advancement Liaison Kathleen Friel and Chief Mate Fionna Boyle.

50th Anniversary of AMO-Contracted Sealift Inc. Celebrated Onboard *M/V Captain David I. Lyon*



The engine crew onboard the *M/V Captain David I. Lyon* sported customized T-shirts to celebrate Sealift Inc.'s 50th anniversary, here in Chin Hae, Korea. American Maritime Officers members working onboard the vessel included Chief Engineer Gregory Brooke, First Assistant Engineer John Nelson, Second A.E. Richard Jones and Third A.E. Ethan Dorval. With them are UA Steven Eustaquio, OMU Myckal Sands, OMU Omar Espinosa, UA David Clark and OMU Grant Loveless. The *M/V David I. Lyon* is on long-term charter with Military Sealift Command is manned in all licensed positions by American Maritime Officers.

Captain Mark Daly Completes Final Rotation on *North Star* After 36 Years Sailing with TOTE



On September 3, Captain Matt Huyter presented Captain Mark Daly with a plaque from the officers and crew of the *North Star*, extending their gratitude and appreciation for 36 years of outstanding leadership as Captain Daly prepared to begin his last rotation on the ship.



Gathering on the *North Star* to congratulate Captain Daly at the start of his final rotation were (left to right) Chief Mate Dan Warren, AMO West Coast Representative Alex Butler, TOTE Group President and CEO Tim Nolan, Captain Matt Huyter, TOTE Maritime Alaska Vice President of Operations Joey Halverson, TOTE Maritime Alaska President Bill Crawford and TOTE Group CFO Jason Gear.



Those gathering to congratulate Captain Daly at the conclusion of his final rotation on the *North Star* included Kelly Scott, Phil Morrell, Bill Taylor, Daryl Swiggs, Turp Christianson, Bill Crawford, Captain Matt Huyter, Cliff Hill, Third Assistant Engineer Kyle Morrissey and Kings Point Engine Cadet Harry Dozor.



American Maritime Officers Agency Fee Policy

1. Any AMO represented non-member employee, whether publicly or privately employed who is subject to a union security clause conditioning continued employment on the payment of dues or fees, has the right to become an objector to expenditures not related to collective bargaining, contract administration, grievance adjustment or other chargeable expenditures. A current AMO member has the right to choose to become an objector, but must assume non-member status prior to filing an objection through these procedures. An objector's fees shall be calculated in accordance with this Policy.

2. To become an objector, an AMO represented non-member employee shall notify the AMO Secretary-Treasurer, 601 S. Federal Highway, Dania Beach, Florida, in writing of his individual objection by mail postmarked during the month of January each year. Such employees desiring to object, but who were unable to make timely objection because they were not subject to an AMO union security clause as of January, either because they are a new employee or have recently chosen to assume non-member status, must make an objection within thirty (30) days after becoming subject to union security obligations and receiving notice of these procedures. The objection shall be signed and shall contain the objector's current home address and AMO Union number, if known. Objections may only be made by individual employees: no petition objections will be honored. A person who wishes to continue an objection in a subsequent twelve (12) month period shall provide notice of objection each January in the same manner.

3. The following categories of expenditure are chargeable to the extent permitted by law:

a. All expenses concerning the negotiation of agreements, practices and working conditions.

b. All expenses concerning the administration of agreements, practices and working conditions, including grievance handling, all activities related to arbitration, and discussion with employees in the bargaining unit or employer representatives regarding working conditions, benefits and contract rights.

c. Convention expenses and other normal Union internal governance and management expenses.

d. Social activities open to non-members and Union business meeting expenses.

e. Publication expenses to the extent coverage is related to chargeable activities.

f. Expense of litigation before the courts and administrative agencies related to bargaining unit contract administration.

g. Expenses of lobbying for legislative, executive branch and administrative agency representation on matters closely related to the ratification or implementation of bargaining unit contracts and working conditions.

h. All expenses for the education and training of members, officers and staff intended to prepare the participants to better perform chargeable activities.

i. Other costs of group cohesion and economic action, e.g., demonstration, general strike activity, informational picketing, etc.

j. An appropriate portion of overhead and administrative expenses.

4. Each December in the *American Maritime Officer*, the AMO shall publish these policies and procedures to provide notice to

AMO represented employees of their right to object and the procedures for objecting. The AMO shall also send a copy of these policies and procedures to each person who objected the previous year to inform the person of his or her right to renew the objection for the current year.

5. The AMO shall retain an independent auditor who shall submit an annual report for the purpose of verifying the percentage of expenditures that fall within the categories specified in paragraph 3 above.

6. The fees paid by objectors shall be handled as follows:

a. Objectors who pay fees by hand shall pay an amount less the percentage of dues and initiation fees ascribed by the audit (described in #5 above) to nonchargeable activities. AMO shall place said fee in an interest bearing account.

b. Objectors who are paying fees by check-off shall continue to have a fee equal to full AMO dues and initiation fee checked off by the employer and transmitted to the AMO. The AMO shall place its share of the fee in an interest bearing escrow account and shall return the admittedly nonchargeable share to the objector.

c. Following completion of the audit (described in #5 above) for a given year, the AMO shall rebate to each given objector an amount equal to such fees held by the AMO in escrow which were ascribed by the audit to nonchargeable activities.

d. If an objector does not challenge the validity of the audit pursuant to #8 below within the allotted time the fees held in escrow shall become the property of AMO. If a challenge is filed, the fees held in escrow shall continue to be so held until the challenge is resolved in accord with the procedures referred to below, at which time the fees shall be distributed in accord with said resolution.

e. Objectors filing objections in January of 2026, in addition to paying fees in the manner set forth for the above, shall receive rebates from the AMO for the year 2025, based upon the audits (see #5 above) for the fiscal year ending in 2025, as they may be modified by the procedures set forth below.

7. The reports(s) of the independent auditor(s) for the AMO shall be completed as soon as possible following the end of the fiscal year. The report(s) shall include verification of the major categories of Union expenses attributable to chargeable and non-chargeable activities. The AMO shall provide to all objecting non-member bargaining unit employees who are represented a copy of the auditor(s) report(s).

8. In the absence of an exclusive statutory review procedure, each objector may challenge the legal and arithmetical bases of the calculations contained in the independent auditor report(s) by filing an appeal with the AMO Secretary-Treasurer, 601 S. Federal Highway, Dania Beach, Florida, 33004, together with notice to the President of AMO at 601 S. Federal Highway, Dania Beach, Florida 33004. non-member challengers in bargaining units covered by the National Labor Relations Act shall also have the right to seek a determination of any issues relating to these procedures by invoking the jurisdiction of the National Labor Relations Board. If such a challenger chooses not to invoke the Board's jurisdiction, or if the Board defers to the appeal

procedures, the non-member challenger's appeal shall be filed exclusively with the AMO Secretary-Treasurer postmarked no later than thirty (30) days after the later of the following two dates: the date the AMO Secretary-Treasurer has forwarded a letter to the challenger acknowledging receipt of the challenge or the date the National Labor Relations Board affirmatively declines to assert its reviewing jurisdiction.

9. Except where State law provides an exclusive statutory review procedure or when a challenger proceeds before the National Labor Relations Board, as set forth in paragraph 8, all such challenges received by the Union within the time limits specified above shall be determined by expeditious referral to an impartial arbitrator appointed by the American Arbitration Association ("AAA") under its rules for impartial determination of Union fees as modified and approved by the courts and these procedures. The AMO will notify the AAA that challenges of its fees, which have been received from one or more individual employees, are to be determined by an impartial administrator and will include the names and addresses of the individuals who have filed their appeals challenging the Union's fees and who should be notified of the proceedings. Thereupon, in accordance with its rules, the AAA will appoint the arbitrator to the case, notifying the Union and the other participants.

a. All appeals shall be consolidated and heard as soon as the AAA can schedule the arbitration. All procedures challenging the AMO's fee determinations shall take place in New York City, and the parties shall be the appellants and the AMO.

b. Each party to the arbitration shall bear their own costs including, but not limited to, attorney's fees and expenses, witness fees and expenses and travel costs. The challengers shall have the option of paying a pro-rated portion of the arbitrator's fees and expenses. The balance of the arbitrator's fees and expenses and all AMO fees and expenses shall be paid by AMO.

c. Challengers may, at their expense, be represented by counsel or other representative of their choice. Challengers need not appear at the hearing and shall be permitted to file written statements with the arbitrator instead of appearing. Such statements shall be filed not later than the beginning of the hearing before the arbitrator. Post-hearing statements may be filed in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 9(g) below.

d. Fourteen (14) days prior to the start of the arbitration, challengers shall be provided with copies of all exhibits or a list of all such exhibits intended to be introduced at the arbitration by the Union party and a list of all witnesses the Union party intends to call, except for exhibits and witnesses the Union party may introduce for rebuttal. Where a list of exhibits has been provided, the challenger shall have a right to receive copies of such exhibits by making a written request for them to the AMO Secretary-Treasurer. Additionally, copies of all exhibits shall be available to inspection and copying at the hearing.

e. A court reporter shall make a transcript of all proceedings before the arbitrator. This transcript shall be the only official record of the proceedings and may be purchased by the challengers. If challengers do not purchase a copy of the transcript, a copy

shall be available for purposes of inspection by challengers at the Union party's headquarters during normal business hours.

f. The arbitrator shall have control over all procedural matters affecting the arbitration in order to fulfill the dual needs of an informed and an expeditious arbitration. The arbitrator shall set forth in the decision the legal and arithmetic bases for the decision giving full consideration to the legal requirements limiting the amount objectors may be charged.

g. Each party to the arbitration shall have the right to file a post-hearing statement within fifteen (15) days after both parties have completed submission of their cases at the hearing. Such statements may not introduce new evidence nor discuss evidence not introduced in the arbitration. The arbitrator shall issue a decision within forty-five (45) days after the final date for submission of post-hearing statements or within such other reasonable period as is consistent with the AAA rules and the requirements of law.

h. The decision of the arbitrator shall be final and binding with respect to all findings of fact supported by substantial evidence on the record considered as a whole and on other findings legally permitted to be binding on all parties.

i. Upon receipt of the arbitrator's award, any adjustment in favor of the challenger will be made from the escrow account.

10. The provisions of this procedure shall be considered legally separable. Should any provision or portion thereof be held contrary to law by a court, administrative agency, or an arbitrator, the remaining provisions or portions thereof shall continue to be legally effective and binding. If, after consultation with the officers on the AMO Executive Committee, the President of the AMO determines that modifications in this procedure are necessary to maintain its compliance with applicable law, such modifications may be made in accordance with the Constitution of the AMO.

11. An objector shall have neither a voice nor vote in the internal affairs of the AMO which includes, inter alia, the ratification of a collective bargaining agreement, whether or not it covers his or her employment.

12. The benefits of nonmembers in an Agency Shop Agreement are such benefits as being eligible to receive the *American Maritime Officer*, representation in grievances, grievance adjustment and arbitration, and no other contract service benefits received by members of the AMO. Such nonmembers shall not be allowed attendance at union meetings, the right to hold or run for any Union office (elective or appointed), or any voting rights within the Union unless and until they have become members of this Union in accordance with the provisions of the AMO Constitution.

13. For purposes of job referral, individuals choosing to become Agency Fee payers shall have the same status under the applicable Shipping Rules as an applicant until such time as the Agency Fee payer pays the total fair share equivalent of the initiation fee specified herein.

Use of the male gender in these procedures shall be deemed to include the female gender.

ADOPTED by the AMO Executive Board November 11, 1998



DIRECTORY

AMO NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

DANIA BEACH, FL 33004-4109
601 S. Federal Highway
(954) 921-2221 / (800) 362-0513
FAX: (954) 367-1066

William Barrere, National President
Mobile: (415) 654-2671
wbarrere@amo-union.org

Robert Rice, National Secretary-Treasurer
Mobile: (954) 295-6160
brice@amo-union.org

Daniel Robichaux, National Executive Vice President
Mobile: (985) 201-5462
drobichaux@amo-union.org

Jeff Richards, National Vice President, Deep Sea
Mobile: (954) 270-2694
jrichards@amo-union.org

Joseph T. Brown, National Vice President, Inland Waters
Mobile: (419) 309-1729
jbrown@amo-union.org

Alex Butler, West Coast Representative
Mobile: (510) 918-8341 / abutler@amo-union.org

Marissa Cap, East Coast Representative
Mobile: (954) 405-4404 / mcap@amo-union.org

Kathleen Friel, Career Advancement Liaison
Mobile: (786) 350-8160 / kfriel@amo-union.org

Dispatch: (800) 345-3410 / dispatch@amo-union.org
Brendan Keller, Dispatcher (bkeller@amo-union.org)
(800) 362-0513 Extension 1061 / Mobile: (954) 817-4000
Roy Emrick, Jr., Dispatcher (remrick@amo-union.org)
(800) 362-0513 Extension 1060 / Mobile: (954) 298-7635
Shawn Stone (sstone@amo-union.org)
(800) 362-0513 Extension 1037 / Mobile: (782) 205-0861

Member Services: (800) 362-0513 Extension 1050
memberservices@amo-union.org / FAX: (954) 367-1066

Contract Analysis: Chris Holmes
cholmes@amo-union.org / contracts@amo-union.org

AMO MEMBERS & APPLICANTS: UPDATE CREDENTIALS, DOCUMENTS
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

OFFICES

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003
700 Pennsylvania Avenue SE, Suite 530

T. Christian Spain, National Vice President, Government Relations
Mobile: (202) 658-8887
cspain@amo-union.org

Alaina Basciano, National Assistant Vice President, Government Relations
Mobile: (202) 603-4548
abasciano@amo-union.org

TOLEDO, OH 43604
One Maritime Plaza, Third Floor
FAX: (419) 255-2350

John E. Clemons, National Vice President, Great Lakes
Mobile: (419) 346-6193
jclemons@amo-union.org
(800) 362-0513 Extension 6003

Peter Kinsey, Great Lakes Representative
Mobile: (419) 917-6671
pkinsey@amo-union.org

Michelle Moffitt, Dispatcher
mmoffitt@amo-union.org
(800) 362-0513 Extension 6005
Mobile: (419) 481-3470

STAR CENTER

STUDENT SERVICES/LODGING AND COURSE INFORMATION
2 West Dixie Highway
Dania Beach, FL 33004-4312
(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 Coast Guard Legal Aid Program
Michael Reny
Mobile: (419) 346-1485
MikeReny@BEX.NET
FAX: (419) 243-8953

AMO PLANS
2 West Dixie Highway
Dania Beach, FL 33004
(800) 348-6515

MEDICAL CLINIC
2 West Dixie Highway
Dania Beach, FL 33004
(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
E-mail — Vacation Plan: amovacation@amoplans.com
E-mail — 401(k) Plan: amo401k@amoplans.com
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

Reminder: AMO Membership Drive with Reduced Initiation Fee Concludes December 31, 2025

Applicants Must Complete Payment of Reduced Initiation Fee and Meet the Other Requirements of Membership Drive by December 31 to Avoid Paying Standard Initiation Fee

The following is the final reminder of the conclusion of the AMO Membership Drive with a reduced initiation fee. AMO applicants who would be affected by this have been contacted directly and notices have been sent by email to vessels and personal addresses, as well as being posted on the AMO website.

The American Maritime Officers Membership Drive Program, which provides AMO applicants with a reduced initiation fee under specific circumstances, will conclude December 31, 2025.

In order remain qualified for the reduced AMO initiation fee of \$3,000, applicants for membership must complete payment of the full \$3,000 reduced fee and meet the other requirements listed below no later than December 31, 2025. If the requirements listed below have not been met by December 31, 2025, the applicant will be responsible for completing payment of the full AMO initiation fee of \$6,000 (minus any initiation fee payments already made).

Applicants can check their initiation balance and may make payments online in the AMO member portal by logging into their account on the AMO website at this address (<https://members.amo-union.org/#/login>). For AMO applicants who have not yet registered for an online account, a link on the login page provides access to do so. Members and applicants can also check their dues balance and make online payments for dues in the AMO member portal.

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, a reduced initiation fee in the amount of \$3,000 was 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 December 31, 2025.
2. The applicant will provide Letters of Recommendation from at least two (2) members of American Maritime Officers in good standing.
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 December 31, 2025 will be responsible for the standard initiation fee for deep-sea and Great Lakes officers at the time they applied: \$6,000 (minus any initiation fee payments already made).

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

Maine Maritime Honors Fairwater CEO Daniel Thorogood

Fairwater CEO Daniel Thorogood delivered a strong call to action at Maine Maritime Academy's Admiral's Dinner, describing this period as "the most important moment for American maritime in fifty years."

Honored at the event for his leadership in U.S. shipping, Thorogood said the industry is at a turning point marked by new shipbuilding projects and long-overdue federal investment.

"Spring has arrived in American maritime," he told the audience. "But spring only turns into a fruitful summer if we plant the right seeds and tend the garden."

Thorogood cited construction of five new National Security Multi-Mission Vessels as proof of renewed national commitment.



"These training ships represent a return to fundamentals ... to understanding that if you want a capable merchant marine, you must train capable mariners."

He urged the government and industry to sustain momentum, pointing to the connection between maritime power and national security. "You can't be a global power without the ability to move goods and project strength across oceans," he said.


Congratulating Fairwater CEO Daniel Thorogood at the Maine Maritime Admiral's Dinner were AMO National President Willie Barrere, Maine Maritime Academy President Craig Johnson and AMO National Deep Sea Vice President Jeff Richards.

AMO Joins 80th Commemoration of the End of World War II



The 80th anniversary of the end of World War II was commemorated on VJ Day, September 2, 2025, at the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C., with World War II veterans in attendance. Here with World War II Merchant Mariner Dave Yoho, the keynote speaker at the event, is American Maritime Officers Assistant Vice President for Government Relations Alaina Basciano.






AMERICAN MARITIME
FFICER
WWW.AMO-UNION.ORG

POSTMASTER—Send Address Changes To:
American Maritime Officers: ATTENTION Member Services
P.O. Box 66
Dania Beach, FL 33004

American Maritime Officer
(USPS 316-920)
Official Publication of American Maritime Officers
601 S. Federal Highway
Dania Beach, FL 33004
(954) 921-2221

Periodical Postage Paid at
Dania Beach, FL and Additional Mailing Offices
Published Every Other Month



ISO 9001:2015
Certificate No. 33975