

1: Onboard the OVERSEAS HOUSTON, the first of a series of OSG newbuilds, on the day of the crew-up. Left to right are 2nd A/E Timothy Photopoulos, Chief Engineer Ed Hastings, 1st A/E Tye Keimig, 3rd A/E Steven Shea, Atlantic Coast V.P. Don Keefe, Port Engineer Steven Oldak, NY Rep. Joseph Martucci and Port Engineer Jeff Phill.



Ship's Telegraph

OSG Orders up to Six More Jones Act Tankers

President Ron Davis announced that M.E.B.A. members will be crewing a slew of newbuild tankers newly ordered by Overseas Shipholding Group, Inc. OSG reached an agreement, in which Aker Philadelphia Shipyard, subsidiary of Aker American Shipping ASA, will construct up to six Veteran Class MT-46 Jones Act product tankers (three fixed plus three options). These ships are in addition to the OSG 10-tanker order announced in April 2005 that Aker will complete by 2010.

"This is great news for M.E.B.A. members who will ship out on these world-class vessels of the future," said M.E.B.A. President Ron Davis.

The first of the class in the original ten-ship order, the recently-completed OVERSEAS HOUSTON, has already begun service crewed with M.E.B.A. officers. The second ship in that series will be completed by mid-2007. Work has already commenced on the third vessel.



The new agreement for the additional six vessels is subject to approval by the Boards of Directors of OSG and Aker American Shipping. Upon completion, the vessels would be transferred to American Shipping

Corporation, which would bareboat charter them to subsidiaries of OSG for initial terms of 10-15 years.

2: M.E.B.A. Govt. & Legislative Affairs Director Bill Doyle (left) and our Secretary-Treasurer Bill Van Loo with Rep. Brian Baird (D-WA). They chatted about LNG, TWIC and Jones Act issues.

3: The sight of a newbuild product tanker pulling out of Aker Philadelphia Shipyard will be a familiar one. OSG just closed on a deal for up to six more newbuilds that would bring the total number of OSG tanker orders from Aker to 16. M.E.B.A. will serve on the vessels.





Adm. Kramek Joins Armada

Four-star Admiral Robert Kramek who formerly served as Coast Guard Commandant will help one of M.E.B.A.'s contracted companies pack more of a punch. Armada Companies LLC which was formed a year and a half ago brought Adm. Kramek on-board as chairman of its advisory committee.

Kramek takes the job after serving for years as a top official with the American Bureau of Shipping including as President. Armada CEO Bobbi Wolff said, "The Admiral is a wonderful addition and a great fit with our team. We are looking forward to working with him and are confident that the wealth of knowledge, experience and expertise he brings will be of great benefit to Armada and to our customers."

Our contract with Armada helps provide employment for our members in a variety of capacities including in shoreside opportunities.

4: Former Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Robert Kramek gives the budding Armada Companies a real shot in the arm. M.E.B.A. has a great relationship with Armada which is run by CEO Bobbi Wolf and Executive V.P. Capt. Sandy Jones, former officials for the Patriot Group.

M.E.B.A. Takes Part in AFL-CIO MLK Conference

M.E.B.A. Organizing Director Robert Martin and an M.E.B.A. contingent showed their support and promoted the Union at this year's AFL-CIO Martin Luther King conference and march that took place in Houston, TX. Brother Martin serves on the MLK National Committee made up of ten members appointed by AFL-CIO Headquarters.

The event, which featured workshops, community service projects and a parade was well-attended and helped elevate M.E.B.A.'s profile both within the labor circle and outside.



5: A photo of longtime New York official Jim LaRiviere with a plaque presented to him by Atlantic Coast V.P. Don Keefe. The popular LaRiviere was honored for years of service and contributions to the M.E.B.A. upon the occasion of his retirement.

6: M.E.B.A.'s Organizing Director Robert Martin, a member of the AFL-CIO MLK Committee, networking with Rev. Al Sharpton at the event that took place in Houston, TX.



Dues Dawdlers to be Dumped

Any member or applicant two or more years in arrears on their dues and/or service charges will be put under review by the District Investigative Committee and **WILL BE DROPPED** from the membership or applicant rolls. If you are in arrears and desire to retain your membership or applicant status, you must contact Headquarters immediately to make payment on your arrearage to return to good standing.

M.E.B.A. Locks Up New Fireboat Contract

M.E.B.A. members serving on the New York City Fireboats resoundingly ratified a new 4 ½ year contract covering the three boat fleet. With assistance from Atlantic Coast V.P. Don Keefe and input from the fireboat fleet, New York Rep. Erik Barton and Baltimore Branch Agent Bill McHugh headed up the contract process with the City of New York. As is the case with many agreements brokered with a state or municipality, the contract was made substantially retroactive – to January 1, 2003. Former NY Rep. Jim LaRiviere had initially begun work on this contract before he retired and handed off the baton to Erik Barton. M.E.B.A. represents the pilots, marine engineers and assistant marine engineers aboard the **FIREFIGHTER, JOHN J. HARVEY** and **JOHN D. McKEAN**.



7: M.E.B.A.'s Seattle Branch Agent Karol Kingery (r) with Maritime Administrator Sean Connaughton at the U.S.-flag Maritime Roundtable Discussion in the Seattle World Trade Center. The event was chaired by Richard Berkowitz, a good friend of the M.E.B.A., who is the Director of West Coast Operations at the Transportation Institute.

rescue, the MSC ship was conducting routine replenishment operations in the area.

8: The State of Alaska provides hundreds of M.E.B.A. jobs through the Alaska Marine Highway System and the shoreside employees of the City and Borough of Juneau. At left is Alaska's Acting Transportation Commissioner John MacKinnon with Executive Vice President Bud Jacque.

Final Rule Issued on TWIC

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) and U.S. Coast Guard have issued a final rule governing the issuance of Transportation Worker Identification Credentials (TWIC) for the maritime sector designed to further secure our nation's ports.

Congressional direction led TSA/Coast Guard to develop the TWIC which is a biometric credential that contains information about the holder allowing a transportation worker to access secure areas.

TWIC enrollment begins in March 2007, initially at a small number of ports. Additional TWIC deployments will increase and continue throughout the year at ports nationwide on a phased basis. Workers will be notified of when and where to apply prior to the start of the enrollment period in their given area. After issuance of TWIC cards to a port's workers has been accomplished, DHS will at each port establish and publish a deadline by which all port workers at that port will thereafter be required to possess

a TWIC for unescorted access. The rule is expected to impact more than 750,000 port employees, longshoremen, mariners, truckers and others who require unescorted access to secure areas of ports and vessels.

DHS says that the final rule will enhance port security by requiring such security threat assessments of persons in secure areas and by improving access control measures to prevent those who may pose a security threat from gaining unescorted access to secure areas of ports.

M.E.B.A. continues to work with the rest of maritime labor as well as Members of Congress to ensure that the new system won't place an undue burden on our mariners.



9: Congressman Stephen Lynch (MA-09) is a strong supporter of putting U.S. mariners on LNG ships. Flanking the Congressman is Atlantic Coast Vice President Don Keefer at left and our Boston Rep. Bill Campbell on the right.

NASSCO Begins Work on Sixth Ship in T-AKE Program

San Diego's NASSCO shipyard recently announced the start of construction on the sixth dry cargo-ammunition ship in the U.S. Navy's T-AKE program – vessels that will be sailing for the Military Sealift Command with M.E.B.A. mariners aboard. The as-yet-

M.E.B.A. — Crewed MSC Oiler Rescues Filipino Fishermen

The crew of the Military Sealift Command oiler USNS RAPPAHANNOCK rescued three Filipino fishermen found clinging to their overturned boat off the coast of the Philippines on Dec. 19.

RAPPAHANNOCK, crewed with M.E.B.A. civilian mariners, was operating in the South China Sea when the ship's crew spotted flashing lights from a small, overturned vessel just minutes before midnight. The fleet replenishment oiler deployed a rigid-hull inflatable boat to pull the three fishermen from the rough waters. Once aboard the MSC ship, the rescued men were examined by medical personnel, clothed and fed. All three were reported uninjured. The men were transferred from the ship to authorities at Subic Bay. "It's like a miracle. They were all lucky to survive for several days," said Jeremy Guida, one of 85 civil service mariners who crew RAPPANNOCK. At the time of the



unnamed vessel is scheduled to be delivered to the Navy in the fourth quarter of 2008.

The yard recently held a keel-laying ceremony for the fifth ship in the program. That ship was named USNS ROBERT E. PEARY in honor of the former Navy rear admiral who was one of the first men to explore the Arctic Circle. The ROBERT E. PEARY is scheduled to be delivered to the MSC in the second quarter of 2008. When it joins the fleet, the vessel's primary mission will be to deliver food, ammunition, fuel and other provisions to combat ships at sea.

The first ship of the class, USNS LEWIS AND CLARK, was delivered to the Navy in June 2006. The second ship, USNS SACAGAWEA, recently underwent her builder's trials and was delivered in March. The third ship, USNS ALAN SHEPARD, was launched on December 6, and is set to be delivered in the second quarter of 2007. The fourth TAKE ship, currently under construction, is the RICHARD E. BYRD in honor of the U.S. Navy admiral who explored the South Pole and Antarctica.

Mariners Now Able to Pay User Fees Online

Mariners are now able to pay user fees online for the evaluation of applications, examinations, issuance of licenses and merchant mariner documents at www.pay.gov. Pay.gov allows secure electronic payments to federal government agencies. Payments can be made directly from an individual's bank account or by credit or debit card, enabling mariners to quickly pay user fees and have proof of payment. This new method of paying user fees is part of the Coast Guard's National Maritime Center (NMC) restructuring and centralization project to improve service to mariners and to increase the efficiency of the application review and approval process. Mariners may continue to pay user fees in person at Coast Guard

Regional Examination Centers. RECs also offer assistance in using pay.gov.

Mariner Veterans Bill Reintroduced

Congressman Bob Filner (D-CA) has reintroduced a bill that would pay monthly benefits to U.S. merchant mariners who sailed on behalf of our country during World War II. The bill had picked up about 150 co-sponsors in the 109th Congress and had a companion bill introduced in the Senate. However, the measure never received a hearing before the session of Congress expired. The bill has once again been designated as H.R. 23. Entitled the "Belated Thank You to the Merchant Mariners of World War II Act of 2007," the bill would direct the Department of Veterans Affairs to pay a monthly benefit of \$1,000 to certain honorably-discharged veterans of the U.S. Merchant Marine who served between December 7, 1941, and December 31, 1946 (or to their survivors). Included are those who served in the Army Transport Service and the Naval Transport Service. Moreover, the benefits paid under this Act would be exempt from taxation.

The Merchant Marine had a higher war casualty rate (3.9 percent) than the Marines (2.94), Army (2.08), Navy (.88) or Coast Guard (.24).

The chances for the bill's successful passage in this Congress are not tremendous. However, the probability for a scheduled hearing on the measure has greatly increased. In this new Democratically-led Congress Rep. Filner is the new Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee. The M.E.B.A. supports this bill and will continue to support legislation that helps our Merchant Marine – past and present.



10: M.E.B.A. recently closed on a new agreement for our Matson port engineers. At a bargaining session in New York City are (l-r) Sr. Port Engineer Leighton Tseu, Executive V.P. Bud Jacque and M.E.B.A. counsel Mike McCarthy.

System for Address Changes Online Revised

M.E.B.A. has revised its system for accepting address changes online to make it more secure. Because we are now requiring a signature for validation along with address change info, the webform previously available online has been removed. In its place we have provided a copy of the actual address change form, in either a .pdf or a Word document, that can be printed out by the member or retiree, filled out completely with a signature and returned to Headquarters.

The forms can be mailed or faxed. Those of you with scanners can complete the document, add your signature then scan it and e-mail it back to us. From the main M.E.B.A. webpage (www.meba.us) go to the "Members Only" tab and scroll down to "Address Change." That will take you to another page with instructions and the link to the actual form. You can also obtain the form in any M.E.B.A. Union hall.

Those active and retired members who have not received mailings from Headquarters such as the Marine Officer or other important information may want to log onto our website to clarify their address. Because the M.E.B.A. Plans office in Baltimore and Headquarters databases are NOT linked you must also forward a signed change of



address form to the Plans Office if you wish to update your information with them.

M.E.B.A. Officers in Continuing Persian Gulf Action

Additional M.E.B.A. deck and engine officers crewed up the Keystone Shipping-managed Ready Reserve Force fleet vessel CAPE KENNEDY recently as the ship was put into Full Operating Status. The vessel loaded up equipment on the U.S. Gulf Coast and sailed for the Persian Gulf. With President Bush's announced plan to increase troops in Iraq, it is likely that more activations of RRF vessels will occur.

Members interested in taking part in any future activations should make sure that their "Member & Applicant Data Sheet" at their Union hall is up to date with their latest contact information so that they can be located at a moment's notice.

M.E.B.A. officers aboard Military Sealift Command Auxiliary and Special Mission ships are also sailing into the war zone. These MSC vessels perennially provide support to Navy ships around the globe. The M.E.B.A.-crewed USNS ARCTIC, a Fast Combat Support ship, is on the scene in the Persian Gulf as part of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Carrier Strike Group. The ships in the group have been conducting missions in direct support of troops participating in Operation Iraqi Freedom and maritime security operations.

President Bush just ordered another carrier strike group into the region. The M.E.B.A.-crewed Fast Combat Support ship USNS BRIDGE is part of the USS JOHN STENNIS carrier battle group that is currently in the Persian Gulf.

Navy Salvage Vessel Transfers To MSC, Crews up with M.E.B.A. Officers

The rescue and salvage ship USS SALVOR (ARS 52) was decommissioned and transferred to the Military Sealift Command (MSC) joining the long list of MSC Auxiliary and Special Mission ships crewed by the M.E.B.A.. The vessel was redesignated as USNS SALVOR (T-ARS 52).

The ship was designed for salvage of stranded vessels, rescue and assistance, recovery of submerged objects, and manned diving operations. Commissioned June 14, 1986, SALVOR first arrived in Pearl Harbor on Nov. 1 of the same year, and has been patrolling and working in the Pacific for the past two decades. The ship will continue this mission with a crew of civilian mariners aboard.

M.E.B.A. Ship Receives Bravo Zulu from U.S. Navy

The crew of a Military Sealift Command oceanographic vessel that located the black box of a downed Indonesian aircraft was recognized by the Navy for an efficient mission. The Horizon-managed vessel USNS MARY SEARS is crewed with M.E.B.A. officers in the engine room and MM&P deck officers. M.E.B.A. deck officer Ken Quinn also serves on the vessel as Chief Mate as part of the M.E.B.A./MM&P Pass-Through program. The unlicensed crew is represented by SIU.

A Boeing 737, operated by Indonesia's budget airline Adam Air, disappeared from radar screens on New Year's Day after taking off from the city of Surabaya on Indonesia's central Java Island. The aircraft ran into bad

weather and changed course twice before disappearing from radar screens. The pilot, however, did not issue a distress call. Flight 574, with 102 passengers and crew aboard, had been destined for the city of Manado in Indonesia's northern Sulawesi Island. Indonesian authorities launched a massive search and rescue operation on both land and sea covering an area the size of South Carolina.

The Indonesian led search effort located no wreckage on land. The government of Indonesia then requested assistance from the United States which led to the reassignment of the Oceanographic Survey Ship USNS MARY SEARS to assist in the search.

On arrival in the search area, the ship used her hull-mounted equipment to search the bottom. Due to water depths in excess of a mile, this equipment was not sensitive enough to distinguish details. The vessel entered a local port and loaded more specialized equipment. USNS MARY SEARS, along with five other T-AGS 60 class vessels in the fleet were designed to be easily and quickly altered to meet the demands of varying mission profiles. Two days after departing with the additional search equipment, the signals from the black boxes were located.

Bravo Zulu is a navy term applied to the message saying "Well Done." Rear Admiral Burke sent Bravo Zulu for the well-coordinated and executed plan of attack in locating both black boxes from Adam Air flight 574. The crew of MARY SEARS' ability to quickly and flawlessly shift missions was a direct reflection of its readiness and training. The vessel was recognized for the superb efforts and professionalism of everyone involved.