



UNITED STATES TRANSPORTATION COMMAND

508 SCOTT DRIVE
SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, ILLINOIS 62225-5357

18 March 2003

Mr. Ron Davis
President
National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association
444 North Capitol Street, Suite 800
Washington DC 20001

Dear Mr. Davis

On behalf of the United States Transportation Command, I extend our collective and sincere thanks to you and every member of the National Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA). America's military now stands ready in Southwest Asia, owing in large measure to your remarkable leadership and the matchless performance of every MEBA member.

We proudly salute the exemplary patriotism, dedication, and professionalism of the more than 280 MEBA seafarers currently at sea. Once again, our nation has turned to its merchant mariners to project this country's might onto distant shores in order to preserve our freedoms and way of life. Today, your MEBA seafarers have answered the nation's call, charged the gangways unhesitatingly and, in record time, ensured our readiness to surpass any challenge that might lie ahead!

Responding immediately, your MEBA mariners were directly responsible for the rapid activation of some 40 vessels of the Ready Reserve Force. These actions proved critical to the early movement of ammunition, tanks, aircraft, vehicles, and other war fighting needs. Now embarked on over 30 vessels, MEBA mariners continue to deliver critical combat material to our war fighters. Simply put, we are prepared today because of your mariners' impressive courage and determination.

In times of crises, our "island nation" has always relied upon the willing sacrifice, skill, and heroics of its merchant mariners. You and your MEBA mariners perpetuate that sterling legacy of service, patriotism, and bravery. You have our greatest respect and admiration. We salute you with pride as you provide combat power to our war fighters at this critical moment in our nation's history.

Sincerely

JOHN W. HANDY
General, USAF
Commander

