Matson to launch U.S.-flag service between Hawai'i and the Marshall Islands

Sup-Contracted Matson Navigation Company is introducing a new direct U.S.-flag service between Honolulu and the Marshall Islands that is expected to shorten cargo transit times from the U.S. mainland to the islands by up to eight days.

The new biweekly service is scheduled to call at three Marshall Islands ports—Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro—beginning in the first quarter of 2018.

To operate the new service, Matson has entered into an agreement to buy a 707-TEU, U.S.-flagged containership from Oyster Bay, New York-based shipping company Sealift, Inc. The vessel, which was built in Germany in 2000 and brought under the U.S. flag in 2013 as the Marstan, is being renamed Kamokuki, which translates to “small island or vessel” in the Hawaiian language.

Matson has said that before the ship is delivered late this year, it will be fitted with two 45-ton cranes that can be joined to handle heavy lift cargoes.

The new service from Honolulu will deliver cargo from the U.S. West Coast to Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro with a transit time of about two weeks, depending on the West Coast port, compared to West Coast to Kwajalein, Ebeye and Majuro with a transit time of a day or two weeks, depending on the West Coast port, which translates to about two weeks, depending on the West Coast port, which translates to eight days.

The Hawai'i-Mainland trade route is currently serviced by two vessels, including the Maritime Security of United States (MSU) and the Military Sealift Command's Reduced Operating Status (ROS) vessels.

The Maritime Workforce Working Group is the result of a directive to the Maritime Administration in the fiscal 2017 National Defense Authorization Act. The panel's work is to examine and assess the size of the pool of U.S. citizen mariners in the context of surge shipping of military cargoes in a distant conflict.

The Unions submission to the Working Group is as follows: “Collectively, our Unions represent the overwhelming majority of licensed and unlicensed American merchant mariners working aboard U.S.-flag commercial vessels engaged in all aspects of our nation's foreign and domestic shipping trades, including all 60 U.S.-flag vessels participating in the Maritime Security of United States (MSU) and the Military Sealift Command's Reduced Operating Status (ROS) vessels. We also represent all the civilian merchant mariners who man the U.S. Government's fleet of surge vessels, including the Maritime Administration's Ready Reserve Force (RRF) and the Military Sealift Command's Reduced Operating Status (ROS) vessels. Our organizations are keenly aware of the shortfall in the number of U.S. citizen mariners currently available to crew the government and private vessels in the Department of Defense estimates that it will need under various wartime scenarios. As such, we have a direct interest in the report being prepared by the Maritime Workforce Working Group on this issue. We greatly appreciate the opportunity to present our suggestions on how to not only halt this decline in the number of available qualified American mariners but how to increase the number of vessels operating under the U.S.-flag and therefore the number of American mariners working and available for service.”

The history of our country demonstrates that the United States needs a strong, active, and militarily useful U.S.-flag merchant marine and its American citizen mariners to protect and enhance our nation's economic security and national defense. Privately-owned U.S.-flag vessels and their crews have always responded quickly and effectively to our nation's call, providing the commercial sealift sustainment capability and civilian maritime manpower needed by the Department of Defense to support America's military objectives around the world.

It is important to note that beginning in 2002 with the inception of military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, at least 98% of all related cargoes have been transported to the region on either U.S.-flag commercial vessels or U.S. government-owned and/or controlled vessels—all of which have been crewed by United States citizen civilian merchant mariners.

Most significantly, since 2009, privately-owned U.S.-flag commercial vessels and their civilian U.S. citizen crews have transported more than 90% of the sustainment cargo needed to support U.S. military operations and rebuilding programs in Iraq and Afghanistan.
Suisun Bay vessel removal project finishes ahead of schedule

Maritime Administration (MarAd) Executive Director Joel Szabat joined federal, state and local officials and environmental groups to mark the completion of an agreement to remove 57 non-retention vessels from the Suisun Bay Reserve Fleet (SBRF) by September 2017. The departure of the Cape Borda for recycling reaches the milestone two months ahead of schedule.

“Our progress in Suisun Bay is the result of hard work and smart collaboration,” said Szabat. “There is perhaps no greater symbol of the maritime industry’s environmental progress than what has been accomplished here. Suisun Bay will stand as a great example of what can be accomplished working together and sticking to a plan.”

In 2009, MarAd entered an agreement with local officials and environmental groups to expedite disposal of 57 non-retention SBRF vessels, which are vessels that MarAd has deemed to be no longer militarily useful. This effort will improve protection of the unique marine environment and surrounding bayside community and ecosystems.

A seven-year, environmentally safe cleanup plan was designed and implemented, which expedited the cleanup of all the vessels in the fleet and surpassed the annual Consent Decree target goals established to remove the non-retention vessels. During the first three years of the agreement, 36 vessels were towed out of Suisun Bay, eight vessels more than required.

Thanks to a strong scrap steel market, 27 vessels were sold for recycling, with receipts totaling approximately $30 million. Ship sales revenue, allocated in accordance with the National Maritime Act, provided approximately $75 million to maritime academies, including the California State Maritime Academy in Vallejo, for facility and training, ship maintenance, repair and modernization, and for the purchase of simulators and fuel; and approximately $3.75 million was provided to the National Park Service to fund the Maritime Heritage Grant Program, which provides competitive grants to maritime related projects that preserve historic sites and artifacts related to our nation’s maritime history.

Built as the Howell Lykes in 1967, the Cape Borda served in the commercial trade for nearly two decades, after which the U.S. government acquired the vessel, renamed it, and assigned it to MarAd’s Ready Reserve Force in 1985, and operated by Supt-contracted American President Lines. Cape Borda was maintained in a reduced operating status in Alameda, California until it was transferred to the SBRF in July of 2003. The vessel was downgraded from retention status to non-retention status on July 31, 2006.

TOTE plans new U.S. Mainland-Hawai'i service continued from page 1

TOTE also said the company is in conversations to secure the new deepwater Kapalama Container Terminal berthing and container handling facility in Honolulu, which it says would make it a critical step in making the new service a reality.

The Kapalama Container Terminal, located on the site of a former military reservation, is designed to consist of a new container facility as well as berthing capacity for two container ships, according to the Hawaii Department of Transportation. It’s the centerpiece of a $500-million-plus Hawai‘i harbor modernization plan.

TOTE has admitted that construction of the new ships and a commitment for terminal space in Honolulu are critical for the new venture to move forward, but said that believes the vessels will be in service by early 2020 and 2021.

The company, which is based in New Jersey and is a subsidiary of Seattle-based conglomerate Saltchuk, already has quite a bit of experience serving outlying U.S. areas and territories. For over 40 years, it and its operating companies have serviced both Alaska and Puerto Rico. Company President Anthony Chiaroello said TOTE’s presence on the Hawaiian islands would provide market stability.

Oakland rice exports expected to increase

Officials with the Port of Oakland believe that a new trade pact between the United States and China should increase rice exports coming through the port. The deal opening China’s market to American growers will likely strengthen Oakland’s link in the global food chain.

American rice exports could enter the Chinese market as soon as next year, following approval of a trade agreement last month. The port said it is too soon to estimate how much its business would increase.

The port added, however, that its volumes should rise based on three factors; California’s Sacramento Valley is one of the largest rice producing regions in the United States, the Port of Oakland is the nearest gateway to China for containerized rice exports from the valley, and Oakland is already the nation’s leader for rice export, shipping two-thirds of all U.S. containerized rice exports.

“We’re glad a rice agreement has been reached,” said Port Director John Driscoll. “Given our location and track record with agricultural exports we would hope to play a role in this new trade breakthrough.”

The Chinese trade deal comes as the U.S. dollar is softening against foreign currencies. That makes American products more affordable overseas. As a result, U.S. exports including rice are likely to grow.

Oakland exports were already forecast to rise next year based on another Asian market forecast. The port expects to open a 300,000-square-foot refrigerated distribution center next summer for chilled and frozen beef, pork and poultry. That plant will prepare up to 37,000 20-foot containers of product for export annually.

This past January, the port reported a 23% increase in cultural export tonnage over the past five years. It said growing rice and meat shipments would magnify Oakland’s importance as an international food distribution hub.
Insurers grow anxious as containerships get bigger and cargo more valuable

With CMA CGM, the parent company of APL, reportedly ready to sign a letter-of-intent for nine ultra-large container vessels (ULCVs) of 22,900 TEU, insurers are getting anxious as containerships get bigger and their exposure may be too concentrated.

At a conference in Seoul, South Korea, this month, shipbuilder Hyundai Heavy Industries (HHI) revealed it was in competition with a Chinese yard for the order from the French carrier. So far CMA CGM has declined to comment, but has not denied the reports, something it has been quick to do in the past when linked spuriously to big ship orders.

Notwithstanding liner industry concerns that the sector is already over-tonnage, insurers see yet more behemoths being put into service has reignited the concerns of insurers.

Michael Hauer, head of marine reinsurance for the Singapore branch of Munich RE, said: “The insurance industry needs to try to understand the likely exposure when, not if, a ULCV gets into trouble. Indeed, when the 2008-built, 8,110 TEU MOL Comfort broke its back off the coast of France in 2016, resulting in a total loss of the ship and 4,380 containers, the insured cargo loss was reported at some $300 million. Researchers typically calculate their average exposure per container at $50,000-$100,000, but Hauer said amounts recorded for single containers lost from the MOL Comfort were considerably higher.

Hauer said the growth in size of containerships, more than double in the last decade or so, also meant that historical large loss values “must be called into question”. He said: “We have long understood and accepted that for certain trades/commodities we can expect high-value goods to be in a single box, maybe even into that millions – but surely we are talking low single-digit millions, are we not? We are aware that these expectations are, for a number of largely perishable, commodities, becoming increasingly unrealistic. We are aware of a number of instances where the value of a single pallet can be $51 million or more.”

Hauer went on to list some examples of single container losses, including a truck accident involving a cargo of pharmaceuticals resulting in a claim for around $50 million. “Values of these products within a single 40-foot reefer container regularly reach $50 million,” wrote Hauer, who even suggested that the figure is “possibly conservative.” He argued that “the insurance industry could not continue making assumptions based on what has gone before. Too much has, and is, changing. If we as underwriters do not recognize and manage these trends, it is certain that our capital providers will,” he warned.

USCG: Matson’s Aloha-Class vessels U.S.-built despite foreign components

The U.S. Coast Guard’s National Vessel Documentation Center has determined that Matson’s Aloha-Class vessels qualify as U.S.-built despite containing certain foreign-built components.

The determination means these vessels will still be eligible for Jones Act trade along the coast, said Rear Admiral Melodee Danforth, Director of the National Vessel Documentation Center. The standard for major components not fabricated in the U.S. in total must not exceed 1.5% of the vessel’s steelweight. At 1.25%, the Aloha-Class vessels meet the standard, making them eligible for the U.S. Coast Guard’s determination.

The two 3,600-TEU vessels are currently under construction at Philly Shipyard, Inc., and Matson plans to deploy them in the U.S. mainland-Hawaii trade lane. The first Aloha-Class vessel, the Daniel K. Inouye, is expected to go into service by the end of 2018 with the SUP on deck.

Aussie wharffies outraged by pay cut, foreign labor

Wharffies (longshore workers) at Qube Ports Newcastle in Australia, took job action against a company push to cut wages by 10.5%. From midnight on August 10 to August 24, workers only worked seven-hour shifts and no overtime.

The Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) says workers have said an emphatic “no” to Qube’s attempt to cut wages, which they see as a transparent step toward terminating their workplace agreement. The Union says that Qube management has influenced tenancy-holding workers, threatening them with permanent positions if they accepted the 10.5% wage cut. However, MUA Newcastle Branch Secretary Glen Williams said not one of the members accepted the deal. “What Australian household can afford to cope a 10.5% cut to their earnings, let alone absorb reductions to their superannuation (pension)”?

The Union says the workforce and the MUA have worked tirelessly to secure first world work conditions on Australia’s waterfront, and they won’t let a giant logistics company like this strip 25 years of bargaining history away. If the company terminates their existing agreement, the Qube workforce has decided unanimously not to return to work until a new deal is struck.

Earlier in the month, workers rallied against the importation of foreign laborers at the Port of Newcastle. Although first thought to be part of the transport ship’s crew, it was certain that foreign workers were flown in from Singapore on special visas to help unload its cargo.

“This makes a mockery of our border security,” MUA Acting Newcastle Branch Secretary Dennis Outram said. “At a time when we are seeing unprecedented surveillance and monitoring at our airports, anyone can seemingly come and go through our sea ports. It also jeopardizes the safety and jobs of highly-skilled Australian workers.”

Outram said experienced local workers were being deliberately locked out of their jobs, this time helping to unload huge parts for wind turbines shipped in from overseas.

The Port of Newcastle is the largest port on the east coast of Australia and the world’s leading coal export port.

Skinto-skin exercise at sea

In July, the USNS Red Cloud, operated by SUP-contracted Patriot Contract Services for the Military Sealift Command, together with the USNS Montford Point executed an open ocean “skin-to-skin” exercise. The maneuver allows Large, Medium-Speed Roll On/Roll Off (LMSR) ships like the Red Cloud, to transfer vessels onto an amphibious landing craft transport ship such as the Montford Point, using a ramp carried by the Montford Point that is positioned by the crane of the Red Cloud. Landing crafts may then transport cargo to shore. Bosun Cosme Bigno said that the tie-up and let-go went safely, reports SUP Delegate John Lucia.

During the exercise, the ships executed close quarter turns, torpedo evasions tactics and formation steering; they also used time to practice night time signal communications as well as working with Helicopter Sea Combat Squadron 29 for night time deck landing qualifications.

While the purpose of this exercise was to prepare the squadron in tactical movement, it was also used as valuable training time for military staff of the squadron, who took the opportunity to improve their skills in command and control of multiple ships.

Mark Buzby sworn in as Maritime Administrator

Rear Admiral (Ret.) Mark Buzby was sworn in on August 14, as the new head of the U.S. Maritime Administration (MarAd).

Buzby, a 30-year veteran of the U.S. Navy, is a highly respected military and maritime leader who enjoys broad support on both sides of the aisle on Capitol Hill. He served as Commander of Military Sealift Command (MSC) and then as President and Chief Executive Officer of the National Defense Transportation Association.

As head of the Maritime Administration, Buzby’s role will be to advise Secretary of Transportation Elaine Chao, and to strengthen and expand relations between MarAd and the other maritime industry stakeholders.

Matson extends foreign-flag South Pacific Express service to Tahiti

Matson announced, this month, that it will introduce a new extension of its South Pacific Express (SPEX) service to Tahiti, providing twice monthly arrivals from the U.S. mainland and Honolulu to French Polynesia. Matson will begin accepting Tahiti shipments with the SPEX departure of the Singapore-flag Samaoana from Honolulu on August 22, and first arrival at Papeete on September 4.

The new Tahiti service will leverage Matson’s existing U.S. West Coast network, and its newly enhanced biweekly SPEX service from Hawaii’s with Tahiti cargo transshipped at Apia, Samoa, to provide industry fastest transit times from Hawaii.

With the addition of Papeete, Tahiti as a port of call, Matson now provides export shipping from the United States and Hawaii to many of the major islands of Polynesia, including Samoa, American Samoa, the Cook Islands (Rarotonga and Aitutaki), Tonga (Nukuatofa and Vavau), Niue, New Zealand, and Fiji (Suva).

“This new service allows Matson to leverage existing operations in the region to offer market-leading service to a new destination,” said Senior Vice President-Pacific Vic Angoco. “The people of Tahiti and Hawaii have enjoyed a long and rich history together with shared ethnic and cultural ties. We look forward to strengthening ties between our island communities.”

Defend the Jones Act support the SUP Political Fund
Oakland boosts shore power access

The Port of Oakland has newly-commissioned equipment designed to curb diesel emissions from ships—a high-voltage cable system that will connect more vessels to Oakland’s landside power grid. The 200-foot cable-on-reel system will be deployed by Oakland International Container Terminal to connect to ships that can’t closely align with landside electrical vaults at berth. The $230,000 cable system’s 10-foot-tall reel is affixed to a trailer. The mobile platform can be deployed alongside any vessel to connect ships to one of the marine terminal’s 18 shorepower electrical vaults. When the ships plug into the vaults, they’ll switch off onboard diesel engines and rely on grid power.

Nearly 400 vessels are equipped to plug into Oakland’s landside electrical system. Shorepower is one of a series of steps employed to reduce ship emissions in Oakland. The others include converting ships to cleaner-burning low-sulfur fuel when they near the California coast; moving ships quickly in-and-out of port so they’re not sent to anchor in San Francisco Bay with engines running while awaiting berths; and consolidating cargo on fewer but larger ships to reduce the number of vessel calls.

The Port has cut emissions 76% since 2009.

Somali pirates sentenced to six months plus time served in India

This month, a court in Mumbai (Bombay) sentenced the 15 alleged pirates from the Prantulay 4 hijacking to six months in prison plus time served. The Somali nationals were accused of taking control of the Prantulay, a Thai fishing boat, for use as a pirate mother ship. In January 2011, the accused attempted to board a merchant ship off the coast of Kerala, 1,400 nautical miles from Somali shores. The vessel sent a distress call and the Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard responded: 10 of the 25 pirates aboard the boat died during the firefight that followed, a skirmish known in India as the “Battle of Minicoy Island.” The 15 surviving Somali nationals were detained and accused of kidnapping, four of whom remain in court on the charge of murder and armed-pressing-related charges. They were acquitted of kidnapping for ransom because the former hostages could not be brought before the court to substantiate the charges.

The accused were found guilty on the remaining charges and sentenced seven years and a small fine. As they had spent six and a half years in jail while their case proceeded through Indian courts, the men only have six months left to serve. They will be deported to Somalia after they have completed their terms.

The offenders have been given a lesson that in India there is rule of law and that the offenders are brought to justice," Special public prosecutor Ranjeet Sangle told the

Investigation of conditions of foreign workers in Hawai’i’s fishing industry

Groups have filed a human rights complaint that aims to jump-start an investigation into conditions among foreign workers in Hawai’i’s commercial fishing industry. Turtle Island Restoration Network announced last month that they filed the complaint with the Inter-American Human Rights Commission. The filing asks the panel to determine the responsibility of the United States for human rights violations against foreign workers in Hawai’i’s longline fishing fleet.

An investigation by the Associated Press into the seafood industry revealed that hundreds of men are confined to Hawai’i boats that operate due to a federal loophole that exempts the foreign fishermen from most basic labor protections. Many come from impoverished Southeast Asian and Pacific nations to take the jobs, which can pay as little as 70 cents an hour.

The fleet catches $110 million worth of seafood annually. The petition, which the Pacific Alliance to Stop Slavery and Ocean Defenders Alliance joined, was filed on July 13, with the agency that can make non-binding recommendations to government officials and policymakers.

The Inter-American Human Rights Commission is an autonomous body of the Organization of American States, which works to protect human rights in the hemisphere. The United States is a member of that organization.

“Hawai’i’s longline fishery operates in a void of regulation. Government at the state and federal level is failing to ensure even the most basic human rights for these workers,” said Cassie Burdyshaw, advocacy and policy director for the Turtle Island group.

Since initial reports, little has changed in the industry that provides ahi tuna and other fish to American and overseas consumers at a premium price.

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**Norway pioneers crewless ships**

Two Norwegian companies are taking the lead in the race to build the world’s first crewless, autonomously operated ship, an advance that could mark a turning point in seaborne trade.

Dubbed by shipping executives the “Tesla of the Seas,” the Yara Birkeland now under development is scheduled in late 2018 to start carrying fertilizer 37 miles down a fjord from a production facility to the port of Larvik. Using the Global Positioning System, radar, cameras and sensors, the vessel is intended to maneuver itself around other vessels and to dock on its own.

The vessel will cost $25 million, about three times as much as a conventional container ship of its size, but its backers say without need for fuel or crew it promises to cut annual operating costs by as much as 90%. The 100-container ship is scheduled to be in the water toward the end of next year, though initially it will be tested with a human at the controls.

The Birkeland is being jointly developed by agriculture firm Yara International and Kongsberg Gruppen, which builds guidance systems for civilian and military uses.

Petter Otso, Yara’s head of production who leads the electric-ship project, said the company would look to its industry to build bigger ships and use them for longer routes once international regulations are in place for crewless vessels. “Maybe even move our fertilizer from Holland all the way to Brazil,” he said.

The International Maritime Organization, which regulates maritime travel, doesn’t expect legislation governing crewless ships to be in place before 2020.

Shipping executives say autonomous vessels will be popular for short sea routes, but doubt they will replace oceangoing ships that move thousands of containers across continents and have an average crew of around 25 people.

“It’s not a matter of technology, which is already there, but a business case,” said Lars Jensen, chief executive of Sea Intelligence Consulting in Copenhagen. “Autonomous ships are expensive to begin with, and don’t have to be built very robust, because if they break down, the cost of getting a team to fix them in the middle of the ocean will be very high.”

In addition to reducing fuel and labor costs, the Birkeland project is being pitched as a way to cut emissions. The ship is expected to replace 40,000 truck journeys a year through urban areas in southern Norway, the company said.

Ship operators increasingly are being asked to introduce cleaner fuels when sailing close to populated coastal areas, especially in the U.S. and Europe.

“We want to go zero emission,” said Mr. Otso. “Even if some say climate change is not reality, it’s a business reality because clean sources of energy are more affordable than fossil fuels.”

The Birkeland will become autonomous in stages. At first, a single container will be used as a manned bridge on board. Then the bridge will be moved to shore and become a remote-operations center. The ship will eventually run fully on its own, under supervision from shore, in 2020.

“When the bridge goes out of land, it will be something like having a baseball player from a command center,” said Kongsberg’s Chief Executive Geir Haøy. “It will be GPS navigation and lots of high-tech cameras to see what’s going on around the ship.”

The engineers aren’t alone in looking into autonomous shipping. British manufacturer Rolls-Royce Holdings is investing in similar technology and plans to launch robotic ships by 2020. The first vessels will likely be tugboats and ferries, with cargo ships that can sail through international waters to follow.

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**Canada: tankers safer than pipelines, rail**

Canada’s Fraser Institute has published a study which finds that transporting oil by pipelines is more than twice as safe as using rail, and marine tankers are safer still with a markedly improved safety record over the past 40 years.

While oil shipped by tanker has increased from 1.4 billion tons in 1970 to 2.9 billion tons in 2015, the amount of spillage has plummeted by 98%.

The report Safety First: Intermodal Safety for Oil and Gas Transportation notes the contentiousness of the Trans Mountain, Line 3, and Keystone XL pipelines, and the study evaluated marine tanker safety in light of the additional oil tankers that will result from the expansion of the Trans Mountain pipeline.

“The evidence is clear. Building new pipelines and transporting oil by rail is the most risky and most environ-
mentally responsible way to get Canadian oil to global markets,” said Kenneth Green, Fraser Institute’s senior director of energy and natural resource studies and co-author of the report.

Since the mid-1990s there has not been a single major spill from oil tankers or other vessels in Canadian waters. One recent study conducted by the federal government on marine oil spill preparedness estimated that a major spill over 30,000 tons would cost over $5 billion to clean up. While there were a dozen spills in 1970s, there has only been one since.

Marine safety has also improved dramatically since the 1970s. For example, when comparing the number of large (>700 tons) and small (700-30,000) spills, there were 153 spills in the 1970s and six spills in the 2010s. In addition, compared to pipelines and rail, marine tanker transport is found to result in the fewest num-
ber of accidents per million barrels of oil transported.

In 1970, pipelines and rail experienced approximately 0.05 occurrences per million barrels of oil equivalent (Mboe) transported.

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**Five Chinese firms invest $300 million in Abu Dhabi ports**

The United Arab Emirates’ (UAE) Abu Dhabi Ports has signed a $300 million investment cooperation agreement with five Chinese firms in the free trade zone area in Khalifa port. The agreement has been seen as part of China’s ambition to rebuild its silk trade routes.

Five companies, all from Jiangsu province on China’s east coast, are involved in sectors including power, met-
als, natural resources, and banking. The five Chinese companies are Hanergy Thin Film Power Group, Jiangsu Fantai Mining Development (group) Co, Xuzhou Jianghe Wood, Jiangsu Jiwei Environmental Technology, and Guangzheng Group.

Under the agreement, Abu Dhabi has signed a 50-year lease agreement with the Jiangsu Provincial Overseas Cooperation & Investment Company (JOIC), which will develop approximately 23,680,000 square feet for the Chinese companies, this represents 2.2% of Khalifa Port Free Trade Zone area.

“The cooperation agreement would see a mutual effort between two parties in promoting economic ties. The investment will contribute positively to Abu Dhabi’s non-oil GDP and help in diversifying the economy from oil,” Mohamed Juma Al Shamsi, Chief Executive of Abu Dhabi Ports said.

According to the agreement from Abu Dhabi Ports, China is the UAE’s second-largest trading partner and the biggest exporter. The UAE is considered a gateway to China and the two countries share a long history of trade and cooperation.

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**“Old Ironsides” leaves drydock**

On July 23, after a painstaking two-year restoration at Charlestown Navy Yard in Boston, USS Constitution was refloated at last. Since she entered dry dock in 2015, ship restorers from the Naval History and Heritage Command and teams of Navy sailors have worked side-by-side to bring “Old Ironsides” back to her former glory.

The restoration involved the replacement of 100 hull planks along with caulking, rebuilding of the ship’s cutwater on the bow, and the preservation and repair of the ship’s rigging, upper masts and yards. Among other tasks, sailors assigned to Constitution helped the Navy’s ship restorers replace 2200 sheets of copper and the felt that is installed behind it. The copper is a defense against shipworms. “It’s an incredible feeling to be a part of the team to work on Constitution,” said Aviation Ordnanceman Hunter Sensign. “Every day I came to work and it really sinks in that I’m working on a ship that’s 219 years old.”

Constitution is expected to continue post-docking restoration work before re-opening to the public in early September. While she is ordinarily at the pier at the USS Constitution Museum in Boston, her commanding officer, Commander Robert Gerosa, says that at some point she will be seen underway under her own power once more.

Naval History and Heritage Command Director Sam Cox emphasized Constitution’s military value in her time. “When she was built, Constitution was among the best-designed ships in the world, she could outrun anything she couldn’t outrun and outgun anything she couldn’t outrun," said Cox. “Expanding that advantage has been the objective of Navy shipbuilders since Con-
stitution’s keel was laid.”

Cox traced the history of naval innovation on display in the new carrier USS Gerald R. Ford directly back to the effort that went into the USS Constitution.

Constitution started her Navy service with her launch at Edmund Hartt’s Shipyard in Boston, October 21, 1797. She was one of the six original frigates that began the new United States Navy. As the Navy’s capital ships, they were larger and more heavily armed than frigates that had come before, and Constitution and her sisters became formidable opponents on the high seas.

She fought in the Quasi-War with France, the Barbary Wars and the War of 1812 and was never defeated. Her defining battle was with the British frigate HMS Guerri-
erre, during which, one of Constitution’s sailors noticed that some of the enemy’s cannon shot up to 300 feet harmlessly off her hull. History has it that he shouted “Huzza! Her sides are made of iron!” – and thus she earned the nickname “Old Ironsides.”

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**Support Food for Peace by Supporting the SUP Political Fund**
and Afghanistan. Vessels enrolled in MSP—all of which are crewed by United States citizen civilian merchant mariners—carried 99% of these cargoes.

However, and despite more than two hundred years of essential and patriotic service—in war and peace—the viability of our industry and its continued ability to provide this invaluable service to our country is in jeopardy. In 1960, there were 2,000 ships over 1,000 gross tons flying the American flag. Today, there are only 169—including only approximately 80 U.S.-flag ships operating in the U.S. foreign trades that carry less than 2% of all U.S. exports and imports. Compounding the serious loss in sealift capability is the ongoing problem in the near future American licensed and unlicensed merchant mariners ready and able to crew the government and privately-owned vessels needed by the Department of Defense in time of war or international emergency.

In March 2015, General Paul Selva, Commander, United States Transportation Command, testified before the Senate Committee on Armed Services. He told the Committee: “The reduction in the number of vessels operating under the U.S.-flag has resulted in a significant shortfall in the overall number of mariners but does so in a way that helps guarantee that there will be a sufficient number of trained and qualified merchant mariners ready and available to the Department of Defense. The time is now for our government to act and we urge the Maritime-Workforce Working Group to include the following in its report:

• Maritime Security Program: The Maritime Security Program and its fleet of 60 U.S.-flag cargo vessels are necessary and essential to ensure that U.S.-flag vessels will be available to the Department of Defense whenever needed to meet the military, economic and homeland security requirements of the United States. Consequently, it is essential that Congress and the Administration make clear that they do and will consistently support the annual funding requests for this program.

• Energy Resources on U.S.-Flag Ships: To the extent our country moves forward with plans to export oil, liquefied natural gas and other strategic economic, environmental, and safety benefits to our nation. Most importantly, the ongoing problems vessels engaged in domestic commerce provide important employment opportunities for licensed and unlicensed American mariners qualified to serve on vessels needed by the Department of Defense. The full enforcement of the Jones Act is necessary and we assure you that maritime labor stands ready to do whatever we can to achieve these objectives.”

Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union

Donald Marcus, President, International Organization of Masters, Mates & Pilots

Sincerely,

Michael Sacco, President, Seafarers International Union

Friday, August 25, 2017

Maritime labor urges immediate action to bolster U.S.-flag fleet continued from page 5

...
ESU Office Assignments

For the month of September, Leo DeCastro will be in the Seabrook office.

ESU News

AUGUST 2017

Official Publication of the Exxon Seamen’s Union

ESU wage rates increase September 1

In accordance with the provisions of our current Collective Bargaining Agreement (CBA) an increase in Base wages, CSB (Continuous Service Bonus), SSHT (Saturday, Sunday, Holiday overtime) and overtime rates for all ratings will take effect beginning with the pay period that starts September 1. The Agreement, negotiated between the Exxon Seamen’s Union and SeaRiver Maritime, Inc. and ratified by the ESU membership is in effect from September 1, 2014 through August 31, 2019.

In this, the fourth year of the Agreement, all rates of pay including Penalty rates will increase by 3.00%. This increase follows a 3.00% in 2016, 3.00% pay increase in 2015 and a 3.50% increase in 2014. In 2013, ESU members will receive an additional 3.00% in all rates of pay including OT and penalty rates.

A complete and comprehensive compilation of all wage tables can be found in Article XVII (pages 66-80) of the CBA. Below are excerpts of wage tables from the Agreement that reflect the increase for the year 2017.

The monthly wage schedule, including additional compensation for years of continuous service (CSB), shall be as follows:

**Total Monthly Wages - Base+CSB -- Effective 9/1/2017**

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<thead>
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<th>RATING</th>
<th>Base</th>
<th>CSB</th>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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**Hourly Wages - Base+CSB -- Effective 9/1/2017**

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S/R American Progress

The vessel arrived Keppel Beno Shipyard in Singapore on July 31. Shortly after that the overdue crew was sent home on vacation, a couple of the AB’s were sent back to the USA to relieve a couple of the AB’s due off on the Liberty Bay. The vessel will remain in the yard until the middle of September. Fleet manning is planning to start sending a full crew compliment to the ship on September 1. AB Mike Harrison will be returning to his ship’s responsibility duties soon.

Eagle Bay

After a couple of weeks in Portland, Oregon, for a repair period at Vigor shipyard, the vessel left Oregon and headed north to Port Angeles, Washington, to wait for the load window in Valdez, Alaska. It will then head south to San Francisco for discharge. AB Peter Flaherty took over the ship’s representative duties and reported some issues with noise during the shipyard period. The ESU contract stipulates that if there is a noise issue while in these mini yards the crew needs to go to the hotel. After talking with management on board this issue was taking care of, but it needs to be noted for future mini yards.

Liberty Bay

ESU board officer Leo DeCastro visited the vessel at Tesoro 121 in Long Beach, California, on August 10. Regular Ship Representative Joe Buffington aboard and reports everything going well except for increasing sea tours length. Another couple of new hire MS joined the vessel and the crew would like to welcome by showing them around their new home. After departing Long Beach, the vessel is slated to load in Valdez for a split discharge in Long Beach and San Francisco Bay area at the end of August.

Ship reports

MS Michel Gomes retires

After more than 16 years of service in the SeaRiver Maritime Inc. fleet Maintenance Seaman Michel Gomes has elected to retire effective August 1. Mike began his career in 2001 with SeaRiver Maritime Inc. with his first seagoing assignment aboard the S/R American Progress. Even though he was very familiar with the vessel, the engine department, Mike was able to maintain his high standards throughout his career.

During his career, he sailed on about every ship in the Ocean fleet and was always a strong supporter of the ESU. Mike was always a welcomed presence aboard ship with his great calm personality and an enjoyable person to work with. Mike’s last vessel assignment was the Liberty Bay.

During a recent phone conversation with the ESU office, Mike asked that the ESU pass along to all of his former shipmates a heartfelt thank you for all the years of sailing alongside his brothers and sisters at SeaRiver and that he will truly miss everyone. Mike’s plans after retirement are to travel and teach a Machine Shop Course at the vocational school in his hometown of San Antonio, Texas.

The Exxon Seamen’s Union would like to express its most sincere thanks to Mike for his support to the ESU throughout his career. The ESU Board and the entire membership wish Mike the best of times in his retirement.

The ESU News is written and edited by the Exxon Seamen’s Union.
ILWU agrees to extend agreement with PMA

The International Longshore & Warehouse Union (ILWU) announced on August 4, that West Coast longshore workers at 29 ports in California, Oregon and Washington have officially ratified a three-year extension of the Pacific Maritime Alliance (PMA) Agreement.

The ILWU Coast Balloting Committee carefully reviewed balloting results from all longshore local Unions and confirmed a tally showing that 67% of members voted in favor of the extension. The current agreement was set to expire on July 1, 2019; the newly approved three-year pact will extend the expiration to July 1, 2022.

The contract extension will raise wages, maintain health benefits, and increase pensions from 2019-2022. “The rank-and-file membership has made this decision and expressed a clear choice,” said ILWU International President Robert McEllrath. “During the past year we saw a healthy debate and heard different points of view, with concerns raised by all sides. The democratic process allowed us to make a difficult decision and arrive at the best choice under the circumstances.”

The risk of long workdays

Working long hours may increase the risk for atrial fibrillation, or irregular heartbeats that can lead to serious cardiovascular complications, a new study in The European Heart Journal found. Lengthy work hours have been shown in several previous studies to increase the risk for cardiovascular disease.

The researchers began with 85,494 men and women from Britain, Denmark, Sweden and Finland with no record of atrial fibrillation. They assessed working hours at the start, and then followed them for an average of 10 years, defining incidents of atrial fibrillation with medical records and death certificates.

They adjusted for many variables – sex, socioeconomic status, obesity, smoking, alcohol use, respiratory disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, depression and other factors – and found that the more hours people put in, the greater their risk. Compared with people who worked 35 to 40 hours a week, those who worked more than 55 hours had a 40% increased risk of atrial fibrillation.

The study wasn’t without its limitations, however, researchers assessed working hours only once among the participants, and the experiment did not account for job type or shift work. Also, there are many other factors that contribute to the risk for atrial fibrillation.

Still, the lead author, Mika Kivimaki, an epidemiologist at University College London, said that “the relative risk of atrial fibrillation associated with long working hours is of similar size as those associated with hypertension, diabetes, obesity and heart failure.”

Welfare Notes

August 2017

Enrollment in Medical and Dental Plans for Active Participants

When you become eligible for benefits, you must enroll in a Plan to have medical and dental coverage. Please contact the SUP Welfare Plan for enrollment information.

If you live outside of an HMO area, a payment is required of the member to help with the cost of the premium for enrollment in the PPO medical plan. Since our contracts have a live in the area or work in the area provision, you can enroll in an HMO medical plan and use the union hall as the address when enrolling in the plan. Enrollment in the HMO medical plans do not require any payments from the members to help with the cost of the monthly premium.

You can use the HMO Plan when you are in port. Only emergency medical treatment is covered outside of the HMO area.

HMO plans include: Kaiser Washington (medical), Kaiser Northern California (medical), Kaiser Southern California (medical), Health Net HMO California (medical), Kaiser Hawaii (medical & dental), Kaiser Portland Oregon (medical & dental). HMO dental plans are Delta Care & United Health Care for California and Dental Health Services for Washington state. Standard Dental for Members not in these areas.

Be sure to complete the enrollment forms with the correct information and mail copies of marriage certificates to enroll a spouse and copies of birth certificates for any dependent children you are enrolling. Enrollment forms must be mailed to the SUP Welfare Plan office. Do not mail the enrollment forms directly to Kaiser, Health Net or any other Plan.

Check the information you have indicated to make sure birth dates and social security numbers are correct and the names listed are the names you want to appear on the Plan records and any ID cards that are issued. Please call the SUP Welfare Plan if you have any questions about completing the enrollment forms.

Enrollments are often delayed because the form does not have a required signature. Also note you can enroll in only one medical and one dental plan. Submittin enrollments for multiple plans will delay your enrollment in any plan until your choice is verified.

After you have enrolled in a Plan, please inform the SUP Welfare Plan of dependent changes including death and divorce and address changes.

Chocolate for the heart

Eating chocolate has been tied to a reduced risk of heart disease. Now scientists have uncovered one possible reason.

Using data from a large Danish health study, researchers have found an association between chocolate consumption and a lowered risk for atrial fibrillation, the irregular heartbeat that can lead to stroke, heart failure and other serious problems. The study was in The Heart.

Scientists tracked diet and health in 55,502 men and women ages 50 to 64. They used a well-validated 192-item food-frequency questionnaire to determine chocolate consumption. During an average 14 years of follow-up, there were 3,346 diagnosed cases of atrial fibrillation.

After controlling for total calorie intake, smoking, alcohol consumption, body mass index and other factors, they found that compared with people who ate no chocolate, those who had one to three one-ounce servings a month had a 10% reduced relative risk for atrial fibrillation, those who ate one serving a week had a 17% reduced risk, and those who ate two to six a week had a 26% reduced risk.

Dark chocolate with higher cocoa content is better, according to the lead author, Elizabeth Mostofsky, an instructor at Harvard, because it is the cocoa, not the milk and sugar, that provides the benefit. Still, she warned about overindulgence.

Membership and Ratings Committee

The Committee met on August 3, and found the following members eligible for advancement in seniority and rating stamps in the various departments:

Name and Membership Number Seating Time Rating Seniority
Brian Boland 19524 1 Year A.B. B
John Reloj 19525 1 Year O.S. B
Jin Ahn C2692 30 Days A.B. C
Andre Price, Jr. C2693 30 Days O.S. C
Boun Stamp - None

Membership and Ratings Committee's Report: M/S to concur in the Committee's report. Carried unanimously. Membership and Ratings Committee: Albert Rossi #19440, William Williamson #3651, and Ponciano Siquinia #19318.

ATTEND YOUR MONTHLY SUP UNION MEETINGS!
U.S. Navy releases initial report on Fitzgerald collision

On August 17, the U.S. Navy released a preliminary report into the events following the collision of the container ship ACX Crystal with the destroyer USS Fitzgerald. The report is a “line of duty” determination, intended only to establish whether the injuries and fatalities that occurred in the collision were due to a violation of the laws of war, while undirected harm actions taken from actions taken in the line of duty. Its authors concluded that all casualties were in the latter category.

The report provides little information on the events leading up to the casualty or the cause of the collision – a much-debated question in the maritime community – but there are several new elements, including the Navy’s values for Fitzgerald’s course, speed and the angle of impact. The Navy timeline asserts that Fitzgerald was making 20 knots on a course of 230, and that ACX Crystal struck her at an angle of about 70 degrees abaft the beam. The vessels’ relative orientation raises new questions in light of ACX Crystal’s AIS trackline, which shows which the container ship headed northeast at the time of the collision.

The Navy formally attributed blame to both vessels. “The collision was avoidable if both navigated and demonstrated seamanship. Within Fitzgerald, flawed watchstander teamwork and inadequate leadership contributed to the collision,” Seventh Fleet said.

While detailed information on the cause of the accident will not be available until other investigations are complete, the preliminary report provides extensive and preliminary findings of the events after the collision. This includes a timeline of the flooding of Berthing 2, which killed seven of Fitzgerald’s sailors.

At 0330 on June 17, the Crystal’s bulwark bow punched a hole in Fitzgerald’s hull measuring about 13 by 17 feet, spanning two decks and two compartments. Water from Acacia’s no. 1 and no. 2 Access Trunks flowed into Fitzgerald’s Commandery Room 1 and the Berthing 2 starboard access trunk. The trunk was not separated from Fitzgerald’s 35 sleeping sailors inside, and the compartment was fully flooded within 30-60 seconds.

A starboard locker made it hard for the sailors to reach the exit scuttle on the port hull, so they entered into Berthing 2, and they had to fight their way through floating debris and furniture to reach the ladder. The water swiftly rose to the top, but the sailors who had exited the compartment did not close the hatch, and several stayed behind to try to rescue their shipmates. They pulled two more survivors out after the compartment had fully flooded.

Seven others never escaped. All of the casualties had been sleeping in the racks nearest to the starboard access trunk, where the water streamed into Berthing 2.

With such a massive breach in the hull, damage control was a critical and challenging task. The Fitzgerald’s crew used two pumps and educators to fight the flooding. Water progressed to other spaces, including Radio Central, Sonar Control, Sonar Control Fan Room, Sonar Control Passageway, Sonar Administration Office, and Combat Systems Equipment Room 1. Main Engine Room 1 experienced minor flooding through piping from AUX 1’s tanks, but it was quickly brought under control.

Above-decks, the bow of the Crystal had torn the outer bulkhead off the commanding officer’s cabin and crushed the interior. The C/O was injured and could not get out. He took the bridge in the bridge for a time, and took it five sailors to break down his door and get through the debris to reach him. He was found hanging from the side of the ship, and “the rescue team tied themselves together with a belt in order to create a makeshift harness” to retrieve him.

Help from the Japan Coast Guard and the Navy soon arrived, and Fitzgerald transited slowly back to Yokosuka, where repair and recovery efforts got underway. The report commended the bravery and skills of the ship and “the rescue team tied themselves together with a belt in order to create a makeshift harness” to retrieve him.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said no injuries were reported on Singapore’s SS United States afloat that a viable option and commercial challenges. Once an intensive $1 million vessel evaluation uncovered insurmountable technical and commercial challenges. Yet despite her former grandeur, the ship was retired from service in 1969 and has spent years mothballed at dock in Philadelphia in an escalating state of disrepair, all the while holding off a looming trip to the scrapyard or the bottom of the sea, having last sailed under her own power more than 40 years ago.

The Conservancy, now in a race against time to raise the funds to cover the ship’s ongoing monthly carrying costs at its current pier, said it was just days away from a decision to either scrap or refit the vessel.

“This donation gives us more time to raise additional resources for the ship’s expenses as we continue to negotiate with prospective developers and secure a permanent location for the vessel,” stated the Conservancy’s executive director, Susan Gibbs, granddaughter of the vessel’s designer, renown naval architect William Francis Gibbs. “Jim Pollin’s passion for the SS United States is inspiring and extraordinary. He is a hero to all those who care about saving our nation’s heritage.”

The Conservancy, which saved the ship from certain destruction in 2011, had set a goal of raising $500,000 to keep the ship afloat back in May. To date, “the We are the United States” campaign has raised nearly $200,000, as the organization is actively courting developers and investors to revitalize the vessel as a stationary, mixed-use, landmark destination.

“Given the state of the ship, only a strong and committed attempt to save the ship have been made over the years, including the most recent in February 2016, when Crystal Cruises reached a deal with the Conservancy to potentially restore the Big U to liner service. The plans were halted once an intensive $1 million vessel evaluation uncovered insurmountable technical and commercial challenges.

But Pollin believes the vessel can be saved: “There is no doubt in my mind that if the Conservancy can continue to keep the United States afloat that a viable option for her future will be presented,” he said. “So much of who we are as a country is represented by this great ship. Americans need to step up now to help save her. The United States is as much a part of our nation as the ground on which we live and work. We cannot allow her to be destroyed. It would be a terrible loss for the nation.”

Gibbs said, “We hope that this generous donation inspires others to contribute and help us secure a bright future for the SS United States. Sixty-five years ago this month the ship returned to New York after her record-breaking maiden voyage, and she became a national heroine. That America’s Flagship remains afloat today is a testament to the ship’s resilience and historical importance.”

Another U.S. Navy destroyer collision

As the West Coast Sailors went to press, it was reported that the guided-missile destructor USS John S. McCain was involved in a collision with the merchant vessel, SS United States. The collision occurred at 6:24 A.M. Japan Standard Time on August 21. Ten sailors are missing and five have been injured.

John S. McCain sustained damage to her port side aft. Significant damage to the hull resulted from flooding of nearby compartments, including crew berthing, machinery and communications rooms. Damage control efforts by the crew halted further flooding.

The Maritime and Port Authority of Singapore said no injuries were reported on the Alnic, which suffered some damage to its forepeak tank well above the waterline.

Search and rescue efforts coordinated with local authorities. Malaysian authorities, including officers and men from the Royal Malaysian Navy, were dispatched immediately, and search and rescue efforts continue in coordination with local authorities. The Republic of Singapore Fearless-class patrol ships RSS Gallant, RSS Resilience, and Singaporean Police Coast Guard vessel Basking Shark rendered assistance. Additionally, MH-60S and MH-60P-22 helicopters from the amphibious assault ship USS America provided search and rescue assistance.

The warship sailed under her own power to Singapore’s Changi Naval Base. 

SS United States sits out of commission in Philadelphia. Photo: SS United States Conservancy

SS United States thrown a lifeline

Just days away from a verdict on its ultimate fate, the historic passenger ship SS United States has received a lifeline in the form of a $150,000 donation to a fundraising effort which aims to save “America’s flagship” and restore the storied vessel to its former glory.

The $150,000 contribution from cruise industry executive Jim Pollin to the SS United States Conservancy’s “We are the United States” campaign has enabled the national nonprofit organization to extend its fundraising and outreach effort through mid-September.

Launched in 1952 as the fastest and largest passenger liner in the world, the SS United States was regarded as an American symbol of elegance and technological prowess, capturing the TransAtlantic speed record on her maiden voyage (a record still held to this day), and transporting more than one million passengers over her lifetime, including four U.S. presidents, international royalty and countless Hollywood celebrities.

Yet despite her former grandeur, the ship was retired from service in 1969 and has spent years mothballed at dock in Philadelphia in an escalating state of disrepair, all the while holding off a looming trip to the scrapyard or the bottom of the sea, having last sailed under her own power more than 40 years ago.

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U.S. Transportation Command issues maritime shipping contracts

U.S. Transportation Command, last month, awarded 11 U.S.-flag shipping lines contract modifications worth a total of $871 million. All the awards are option year contract modifications for international ocean and intermodal distribution services. Work will be performed worldwide as specified on each individual order, and is expected to be completed August 31, 2018.

The U.S. Transportation Command, Directorate of Acquisition, Scott Air Force Base, Illinois, is the contracting activity. The shipping lines and estimated amounts are:

- American President Lines Ltd Inc., Scottsdale, Arizona $230,749,372
- Maersk Line Ltd, Norfolk, Virginia $204,458,639
- Matson Navigation Company Inc., Oakland, California $185,515,856
- Hapag-Lloyd USA LLC, Piscataway, New Jersey $182,626,528
- American Roll-on/Roll-off Carrier LLC, Woodfield Lake, New Jersey $160,071,134
- Farlins Line Inc., Norfolk, Virginia $57,755,370
- Liberty Global Logistics LLC, Lake Success, New York $50,062,446
- Central Gulf Lines Inc., Mobile, Alabama $21,979,331
- TransAtlantic Lines, Greenwich, Connecticut $18,480,592
- TOTE Maritime Puerto Rico LLC, Jacksonville, Florida $18,079,097
- Young Brothers Ltd, Honolulu, Hawai’i $16,595,501

In addition to his work with AFL-CIO, Wytkind will also work with labor, industry, think tanks, and government at all levels to push for infrastructure investment, advocate for smart policies, and tackle new challenges, such as the changing nature of work and the wave of automation sweeping across the economy.

ROMAINE DUDLEY

Romaine Dudley or “The Ranger” crossed the bar last month after 71 years in the SUP. Retiring in 2003, Brother Dudley continued working as the volunteer instructor of the Andrew Faresweth School of Seaman- ship at Headquarters, teaching all who were interested, marlinspike seamanship. Dudley finally swallowed the hook in 2014 and was relieved by pensioner Dave Larson. The membership owes a debt of gratitude to members, like Brother Dudley, who give their time unselfishly to advance the craft of seafaring.

Smooth sailing Ranger and thanks.

HOLIDAY

All SUP halls will be closed on Monday, September 4, in observance of Labor Day, a holiday under all SUP agreements.

ACTION TAKEN

M/S to concur with the President’s Report in its entirety. Carried unanimously.

Gunnar Lundeberg

U.S. Transportation Command issues maritime shipping contracts

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has filed additional material to the accident docket of the 2015 sinking of the cargo ship El Faro.

The NTSB originally expected to issue its final report within 18 months, but the nearly two-year investigation into the sinking of the vessel during Hurricane Joaquin has been delayed in part due to missing and jumbled information.

Two items related to the voyage data recorder (VDR) transcript, an addendum and an errata sheet, were added to the board’s investigation docket. The four-page addendum provides additional information not included in the previously released VDR transcript.

The El Faro’s VDR was initially analyzed and transcribed in the fall of 2016 by NTSB investigators working with representatives of the U.S. Coast Guard and Tote Services, the owner and operator of the El Faro. However, the December 2016 release of the VDR transcript had a “poor” quality of the audio recording, even with extensive digital filtering – not every word or phrase could be determined in the initial analysis, according to NTSB.

Due to the quality of the transcript, NTSB continued to analyze information and had additional listening sessions of the VDR. These sessions resulted in some additional dialogue being transcribed because the information was determined to be relevant to the investigation, said NTSB.

The five-page errata sheet added to the VDR transcript is a list of grammar, usage and terminology edits to the previously released transcript to enhance accuracy.

In addition to these two add-ons, NTSB has scheduled the human performance Operations Group Factual Report which includes information about the function and terminology edits to the previously released transcript to enhance accuracy. The Human Performance Group Factual Report includes information about company oversight, decision-making, crew interactions, and training and procedures,” while “the Wreckage Trajectory Study includes information about the calculations done to determine the search areas on the sea floor, which was critical to the successful recovery of the El Faro VDR,” said NTSB.

Two more factual reports will be added in the coming weeks, including the Nautical Operations Group Factual Report, which includes information about the function and maintenance of bridge equipment, job duties of deck officers and crew, and how the different types of cargo were stowed and secured; and the Naval Architecture Factual Report, which includes information on El Faro’s design, relevant standards, and stability, said the NTSB.

The NTSB said that while most of the relevant documents have been submitted to the docket, additional documents may be added to it as the investigation continues.
Huntington Ingalls Industries (HII) Chief Financial Officer Chris Kastner announced this month that the shipbuilder has found a buyer for its disused Avondale yard near New Orleans. Kastner said that HII has signed a purchase and sale agreement, but the deal won’t close until the buyer’s due diligence is complete. He did not identify the prospective purchaser of the 265-acre site or the terms of the agreement. Avondale has been on the market since 2015, and HII had dropped the asking price from $125 million to $95 million prior to the sale.

Previous interested parties had included Kinder Morgan, which operates a tanker fleet, and the Port of New Orleans, which had studied whether it might be possible to convert a portion of the site into a breakbulk terminal and logistics park. Port director Brandy Christian told New Orleans outlet CityBusiness in January that “we’re in the process of assessing or trying to find potential partners to make that happen.” However, a spokeswoman for Port of New Orleans said that her organization is not the buyer, adding that the port is pleased at news of the sale.

Avondale was once owned by Northrop Grumman, but the defense contractor decided to close it as part of a consolidation process in 2010. Shortly thereafter, Northrop spun off its shipbuilding holdings as Huntington Ingalls Industries. Avondale completed its final vessel in 2014, the San Antonio-Class amphib USS Somerset, and closed its doors. HII consolidated its Gulf shipbuilding operations at its Pascagoula, Mississippi complex.

Over its 77-year history, Avondale completed over 2,400 vessels and offshore modules of various types, from warships to icebreakers to container ships. Among other noteworthy projects, it built several of the well-known “LASH” barge carriers; a prison rules of various types, from warships to icebreakers to container ships. Among other

Vice President’s Report

August 2017

In addition to the routine duties of the front office, checked the following ships:

USNS Waters: Noel Romero, delegate. Clarification on bridge watchstanding: although helmsman and lookout are the primary watchstanding duties of an Able Seaman other assignments under this contract may be appropriate. The Union was informed that this ship will likely turn over to a new operator later this year. The turnover here stemmed not from a lack of performance but rather an unattainable change to the ship grouping of the contract bid (resulting in much lower wages) which rather than struggle to crew, the SUP, MFOW, MEBA and MMT respectfully declined to pursue. The Waters has been for many years a great ship for the SUP with its complex underway operations in support of the U.S. Navy. Hundreds of sailors have gained here the seastime, seamanship and seniority necessary for advancement in a challenging maritime regulatory environment. Picture below is one of the best SUP crews to ever sail in that ship.

USNS Charleston: Jesus Derramas, delegate. Sean Bane will relieve Dennis Sumugue as bosun on a normal rotation before activation from a months long stint in RAV status in a New Jersey shipyard. Fully qualified crew shipped from Honolulu Branch for East Coast base loading and eventual pre-positioning deployment in western Pacific.

USNS Red Cloud: John Lucia, delegate. Engaged in offshore sea-basing operations with the semi-submersible Expeditionary Transfer Dock (ESD) ship Montford Point. A “donation” to the shuttle bus is inappropriate and registered objection. Continuing action of restriction in Long Beach is ongoing.

Manukai: Randy Runyan, delegate. Short-handed watch assignments should be to one of the two daymen, not the bosun. Other clarifications by email.

Florida Voyager: Terry Black, delegate. SF Business Agent Roy Tufono met the ship on arrival at Richmond Long Wharf and encountered no problems. The new Texas Voyager (ex-Liberty) is expected to replace the laid-up California Voyager in September. Proposed upgraded training program to management on request.

APL: Philippines: Jenn Corrente, delegate. Shore leave access problem at distant new berth in Busan brought to the attention of the Company; some improvements made.


San Francisco Bar Pilots: Mike Koller, delegate. Represented station boat crew in personnel matter. Some trainee operators progressing toward clearance status; continuous training and improvement is a required part of the job that is tougher now than ever before. No beefs.

Foss Maritime Company: JD Rymel, delegate. Company issued report and new policy regarding exposure to hazardous vapors. New tractor tug and revived business restored the two fully crewed steady-schedule boat arrangement as laid out in and subject to the rules of Section 26 of the Agreement.

Dave Connolly

Stowaways found inside container at Montreal

Canadian authorities are treating the discovery on July 20, of four men hiding in a shipping container at the Port of Montreal as a case of illegal entry, officials told Reuters.

The men, in their 30s, suffered dehydration but no severe injuries and were taken to a hospital, said Stephane Smith, a spokesman for Urgences Sante emergency services. Local media and a source familiar with the matter said the men were from the former Soviet Republic of Georgia.

The men were hidden in a container found on the OOCL Montreal, which arrived at the port after making stops in Hamburg and Antwerp, according to Reuters data.

A Canadian representative of the Orient Overseas Container Line (OOCL) in Toronto declined to comment, but said the company has its own “internal investigation going on” and is cooperating with the Canada Border Services Agency.

The SUP gang aboard the USNS Waters this month. The captain says, “They’ve been doing a bang up job.” Pictured are: AB Dale Lindquist, AB Faye Orosz, Bosun Tim Benton, AB Noel Romero, OS Eric Vasquez and OS Joe Bulerite. Photo: Noel Romero, Delegate.
**SUP Branch Reports**

**Seattle**

July 17, 2017

Two Boatswains shipped, filled with B seniority; 4 Able Seaman jobs shipped that went to 2 B and 2 C cards; 2 Ordinary Seaman jobs taken by 2 C cards; and 1 GVA AB, with var bottoms, for a total of 9 seagoing jobs shipped.

Registration: 2 A cards for a total of 12; 9 B cards for a total of 24; 5 C cards for a total of 10; and 4 D cards for a total of 10.

I represented the SUP at the following meetings: MLKC Executive Board and Delegates meetings, Ballard Locks Economic Impact Study, Marine Exchange of Puget Sound Members meeting.

*Members, when you make the hall, bring all your documents with you. Let’s go through them to be sure you are current. Other than your “drug-free” you cannot go to work on documents that will expire during your dispatch.*

Brendan Bohannon, Acting Branch Agent

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**Honolulu**

July 17, 2017

Shipped the following jobs in the month of July: 5 AB Day steady, 2 AB Day relief, 1 AB Day return, 1 AB Watch steady, and 2 AB maintenance. The shipping jobs were filled by 5 A cards, 5 B cards, and 1 C card.

Shipped 33 standby jobs. The standby jobs were filled by 4 A cards, 3 B cards, 18 C cards, and 8 D cards.

Registered in Honolulu: 6 A cards; 13 B cards; 7 C cards; 4 D cards.

*Ships checked*

I visited the R.J. Pfeiffer, Manukai, Manuāli, Manuuali, Manoa, Mokihana, Kauai, Maui, Mahimahi, and the Paint and Rigging gang. All are running with few or minor beefs.

APL Guam-no major beefs

APL Saipan-no major beefs

USNS Charleston-still waiting for this ship to re-crew

I represented the SUP at the Hawaii’s Maritime Port Council meeting, and the APL-CIO Executive Board meeting. I would like to thank the Negotiating Committee and the leadership of the SUP for a great new contract. Also, I would like to thank Nick Manessiotis for filling in for me while I was on vacation at my family reunion in Southern California.

The annual Hawaiian Labor Unity Picnic will be held at the Waikiki Shell on Sunday, September 3, from 1600 until 2100. Gates will open at 15:30. And as always, you check your papers and anything with less than six months left you should start the renewal process. Just saying. Mahalo,

Mike Dirksen, Branch Agent

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**Drunk captain charged in New Zealand**

The captain of a 40,000-ton logging ship has been fined for being under the influence of alcohol after an “exceptionally high” reading was taken by New Zealand police.

The police were alerted by the pilot assisting the Singapore-flag Shansi at Port Northland on August 4. Senior Pilot, Kirit Barot, and Pilot trainee, Richard Oliver, boarded Shansi to help her enter Whangarei Harbor and berth at North Port. They were concerned the master smelled of alcohol and about his behavior, so contacted the ship’s agent, the harbor master, and Maritime New Zealand.

On August 7, the Whangarei District Court fined 53-year-old Captain Anthony Gary Rymel $2100. Gates will open at 15:30.

And as always, you check your papers and anything with less than six months left you should start the renewal process. Just saying. Mahalo,

Mike Dirksen, Branch Agent

**Business Agent’s Report**

**August 14, 2017**

**Matsusia**—Called the crew back July 7, to 1 AB Day steady on the July 31 to China. Ship’s due back on the West Coast in the middle of August. Robert Leeper, Delegate, Sam Scott, Bosun.

APL Belgium—Oakland #8: Clarification on work roles and with STCW issues. James Salera as Delegate, Noel Itsumaru as SERANG.

APL Thailand, APL Philippines, APL China—Checked these ships with limited beefs.

Cape Henry—Good gang working hard with Jim Lindermark as Bosun (GVA) Steve Wendell, (GUIDE) Edwin Baptista.


Admiral Callaghan—Routine with the gang in good hands with Mark Pfaff as Bosun, (GUIDE) Gabriel Moreno Jr., (GUIDE) Ande Price.

Cape Hudson—Matsun’s activating the Cape Hudson for a 7-10 days sea trial some time in the middle of August. Then headed to Portland shipyard for some long overdue repairs. In good hands with Phil Coulter as Bosun, (GVA) Robert Richard (GUIDE) Ronald Brito.

Cape Horn—Allocation of harassment is never taken lightly. Launched an investigation into these claims. After interviewing crew members and meeting with the Bosun, sat down with Dale MacGillivray and the Agent. We both agreed that there was a misunderstanding, breakdown in communication and a lack of understanding and what could be done to prevent this from happening in the future. In good hands with Paul Fuentez as Bosun, (GUU) John Rejole, (GUIDE) Wilfredo Aquino.

Pier 9—Station Boat on the new schedule—6 on, 6 off. Running smooth with big Mike Keller as Delegate, Leo Moore as Bosun.

Book members: It’s your choice to register to return or not on a trip-off or lay-up. Failing to register to return will result in forfeiting the job.

Roy Tufono

**SUP members join pension ranks**

The following SUP member joined the pension rank, bringing the total number of SUP members to 173:

Robert Booth, 65, Book No. 5758, joined SUP in 2001, 9 years seagoing service.

Norman Christiansen, 71, Book No. 4770, joined SUP in 1966, 41 years seatime.

Philip Howell, 64, Book No. 5869, joined SUP in 1990, 25 years seagoing service.

Gary Rymel, 65, Book No. 3199, joined SUP in 1999, 15 years seagoing service.

**Deck**

**Bosun**

6

**Carpenter**

0

**MM**

4

**AB**

12

**OS**

5

**Standby**

13

Total Deck Jobs Shipped ............... 40

Total Deck B, C, D Shipped ............ 27

Engine/Steward

QMED

0

Pumpman .................................... 0

Oiler ......................................... 0

Wiper ......................................... 0

Steward ...................................... 0

Cook ......................................... 0

Meson ........................................ 0

Total E&S Jobs Shipped .................... 0

Total E&S B, C, D Shipped ............... 0

Total Jobs Shipped - All Deps. ........ 40

Total B, C, D Shipped - All Deps. ...... 27

Total Registered “A” ........................ 15

Total Registered “B” ........................ 53

Total Registered “C” ........................ 18

Total Registered “D” ........................ 31

**Supervisor’s Report**

**Headquarters—July 2017**

Leighton Gandy, Branch Agent